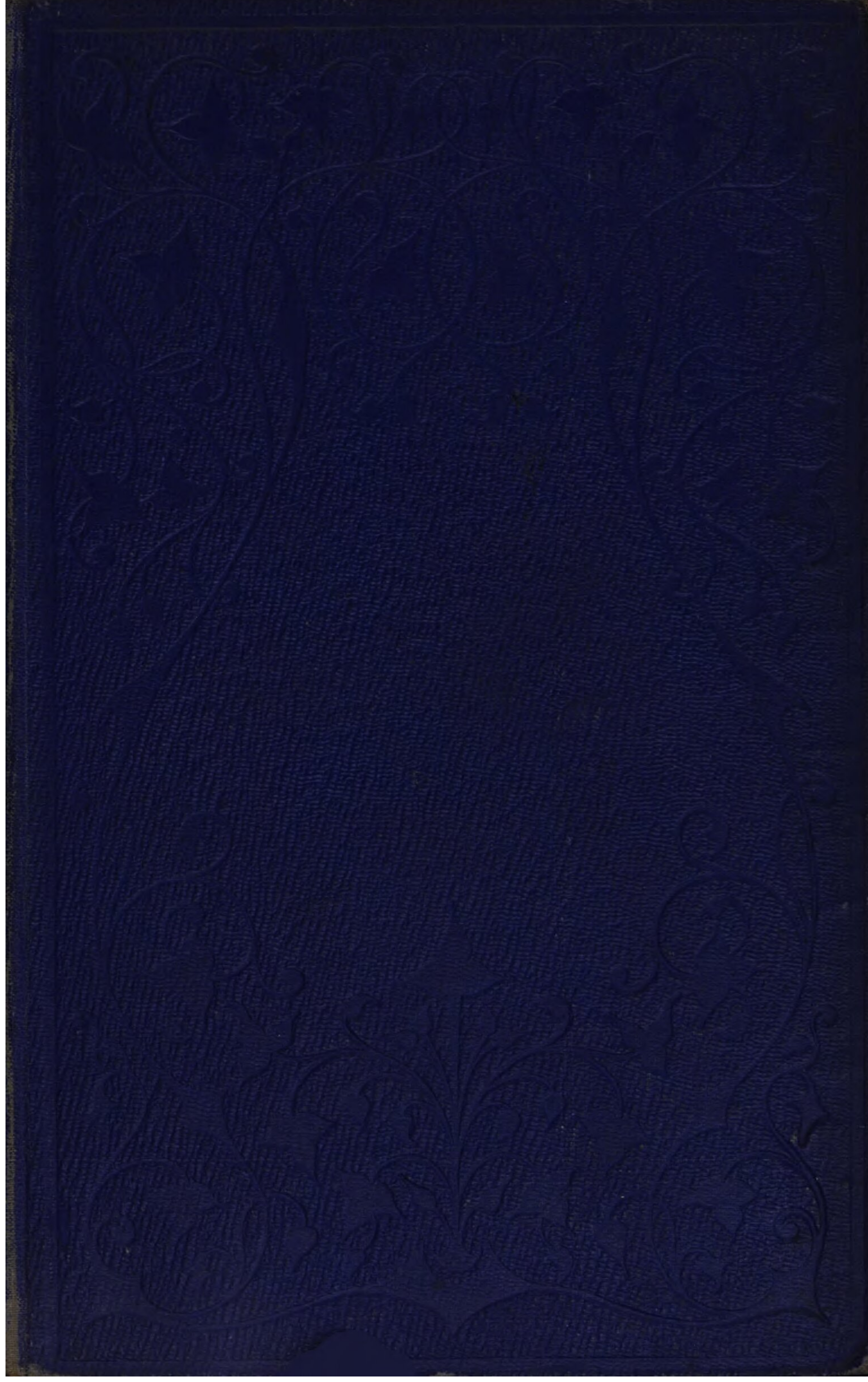
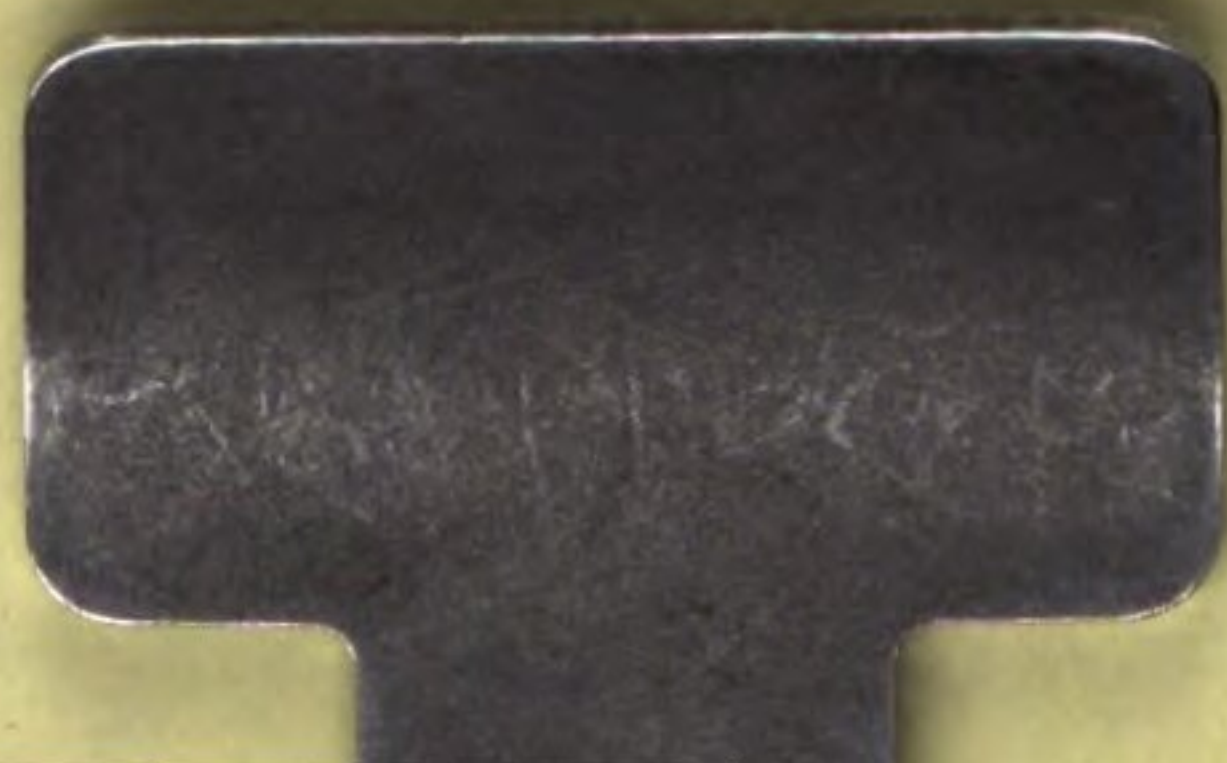




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A T H E R T O N,

AND

OTHER TALES.

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD,

AUTHOR OF "OUR PRIMER."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

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MARY BURGESS

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M. S. MYERS, PRINTER,
22, TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

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DOLLY AND HER BEAUX.

SEVERAL years ago, I spent some months with a near and dear relation, whom I shall call General Vernon, and his no less charming wife, the Lady Anne, at their fine place in the North of England. They had a large and lovely family of boys, from 18 years old to 8, some at Eton, some at a military school, and one already in

the army : and of girls from 15 downwards, all at home ; the elder ones under the care of an accomplished governess, and the youngest, a fairy of three-and-a-half (three-and-sixpence, as her father used to say, when the little lass's age came under discussion), who not yet subjected to the discipline of the school-room, and quite weary of the large, dull, deserted nursery, and the good old family nurse, Mrs. Hicks (I believe she had brought up three generations of the Vernon's), a tun of a woman, who sate in state in a great easy arm chair, grumbling over her corns and her rheumatism,—used to escape as often as possible to the gayer parts of the mansion ; a privileged and most welcome intruder, whose merry voice might be heard singing through hall and gallery the moment you entered the door, and found indeed an almost infallible guide as to which part of the house, the library

for instance, or the drawing-room, happened to be that in which the greater part of the family was assembled. Wherever most people were assembled and most fun going forward; wherever, in short, there was most noise, there, heightening, redoubling and provoking the din, was, you may be sure, Miss Dolly.

Dolly, whose real name, by the way, was Dora, though it is doubtful whether she had been so addressed since the christening; the very maids—even Mrs. Hicks herself, calling her Miss Dolly. Dolly was a nice little girl: small of her age, but well formed and active, with abundance of flaxen ringlets, blue eyes, and a pink and white complexion, not much unlike her own great wax doll, and not very much larger, the chief difference between them consisting in the absence of noise and motion on the doll's part, wherein Dolly had the advantage, and in the far superior

neatness of the waxen lady's apparel: neither Mrs. Hicks, nor her aide-de-camp, Patty (the nursery maid) being able to keep Dolly tidy, though they tried hard, after their several fashions, to achieve that most laudable object. Mrs. Hicks hoping, lamenting, and sighing in her great chair, over torn frocks and tattered trowsers; whilst Patty chased her young mistress, needle in hand, running up tucks, sewing on strings, and tying sashes; all of which might truly be called labour in vain, for Dolly was a romp at heart, a romp in grain, and it would be as easy to wash a black-moor white as to preserve cleanliness and order in the person of a young lady who labours under that unlucky propensity.

Dolly (I am sorry to give so bad a character to my heroine) was a most inveterate romp. She romped with her brothers and sisters wherever she met with them; with her father and mother whenever she

could coax them into the sport ; with Miss Harris, the governess ; with Patty, the nursery maid ; and, finally, notwithstanding corns and the rheumatism, with Mrs. Hicks herself, who, in spite of a considerable degree of gravity, mental and bodily, and a decided theoretical objection to such rudeness, could not always find in her heart to resist Dolly's practical temptation, especially when Dolly climbed to the top of her great chair, and stole the very spectacles from off her nose.

This was the signal for a game of play, which used to last till poor fat Mrs. Hicks, tired as ever a poor fat Mrs. Hicks was before, was forced to give in and cry for quarter : and then Dolly (who seldom attacked Mrs. Hicks until she had exhausted the patience of her other biped play-fellows) used to resort to the quadrupeds of the house—her mamma's lap-dog, her papa's poodle, her sister's kitten,

Miss Harris's cat, and a much enduring terrier of her own, called Tiny, for amusement and consolation ; and they, especially Tiny and the kitten, would enter into her glee, and jump and frisk about, and scratch and tear the clothes upon her back, and make such a commotion as would have wearied anybody under the sun except Dolly ; but Dolly was untirable. It was perfectly wonderful how much fatigue, under the name of play, that little person could endure—from sunrise to sundown she was in perpetual motion. Miss Harris (who dreaded her coming into the school-room) used to declare that it made her head ache only to look at her !

Besides being a romp, Dolly (the sins are apt to go together in damsels under four years old) was, I am sorry to say, a most desperate flirt. She had early made the discovery that gentlemen, who have no bonnets to discompose, nor gowns to

rumple, make far better play-fellows than ladies who have their millinery and petticoats to take care of, and are, besides, less strong in the arm, and therefore less capable of giving, what Dolly liked better than anything, a good high toss. Gentlemen were, therefore, her decided favourites; and every male visitor, who came to the house, was sure of being challenged to a game of romps with Miss Dolly. But, besides these chance beaux, she had, nearly from the time she could talk, a regular flirtation on hand with some favourite of the house.

First on the list was Mr. Simon Bates, the house steward; a retainer of the family of somewhere about Mrs. Hicks' standing, for whom in his youth he had been suspected of a lurking *penchant*, and for whom he still retained sufficient partiality to induce him to pay her long and frequent visits in the nursery, when his flirtation

with Miss Dolly commenced. It did not last long. Poor Mr. Simon Bates, besides being nearly as unwieldy as Mrs. Hicks, was subject to fits of the gout, which utterly incapacitated him from the active gambols that his young lady required, so he relinquished his post, or she turned him off (either version may serve) as speedily as possible.

His successor was Mr. Jackson the butler, whose pantry, abutting on the great stairs, threw him frequently in Dolly's way, and enabled him to give her two exercises of which she was exceedingly fond—sliding down the banisters, and trotting round the hall on horseback, Mr. Jackson performing the part of a steed, and prancing and curvetting on hands and feet for her gratification. What added to her pleasure in this sport was Jackson's being furnished with a natural bridle, in the shape of a pig-tail, he being of the old-

fashioned race of butlers, with a red face blazing amidst his frizzed and powdered hair—silk stockings, paste buckles, and, on state occasions, an embroidered waistcoat with long flaps, which some former head of the Vernons had worn at court. A capital steed, Dolly, in her lisping English, was pleased to call him “vely nithe horthe;” but, notwithstanding his alacrity in moving on all-fours, poor Mr. Jackson’s red nose was fated to be put out of joint even sooner than that of his predecessor, Mr. Bates.

The favourite by whom the galloping butler was superseded, was a certain Eugene Prince, or, as his comrades called him, Prince Eugene, who accompanied Harry Vernon home from the Military College, one Christmas holidays. Prince Eugene was exactly the person to worry a young lady off her feet; bold, active, lively, and good humoured, and blest with

such a fund of animal spirits that he could even tire down Dolly herself. Prince Eugene was irresistible; he tossed her over his head, he shook her into penny pieces, he called her his little wife, he sang songs, made faces, and played Punch for her amusement; and reigned without a rival, whether on four feet or on two. But, alas! the Christmas hours do not last for ever. Prince Eugene departed, and poor Dolly was left a disconsolate damsel, to seek another play-fellow as best she might.

She found, or rather made one, in the shape of the vicar of the parish; a grave, decorous, respectable, Mr. Harman, who at first sight seemed an unpromising subject for a romping bout. But the gentleman had more fun in him than he seemed to have; and being much at the house, and amused by the manner in which Dolly forced herself upon his attention, and in-

sisted on his tossing her up to the ceiling, and shaking her into penny pieces, and calling her his little wife, like her "poor dear Printhe," he took very greatly to the office, and, on my arrival at General Vernon's, I found him as regularly romping with Dolly after dinner, as saying grace before.

This state of things did not last long ; Dolly was, as I have said, a flirt as well as a romp; and an occasion soon presented itself for displaying her unlucky quality in full perfection. It came, as usual, in the form of a rival.

The time of my visit happened to be on the eve of a general election ; and a few days after my arrival, a fellow guest made his appearance in the shape of a young baronet, who was a candidate for the representation of the next town, where the Vernons had great interest. A very agreeable person was Sir Robert,—cheerful,

pliant, and good humoured, and so overflowing with civility, that he made his court to every creature in the house, from Lady Ann, the really lovely eldest daughter, down to Finette and Tiny. Of course Dolly was not overlooked. He out-tossed and out-shook Mr. Harman ; made more faces and sang more songs than Prince Eugene ; played Punch twice over ; galloped on all fours three times round the great drawing-room ; declared that she should be nobody's wife but his ; and finally, promised to carry her away with him the next morning.

The night had been stormy, and Mr. Harman had, as was frequently the case in bad weather, slept at the great house ; and the morning being brilliantly fine, we were all assembled to witness the departure of the two gentlemen—the one on foot to the vicarage, the other on horseback to the independent borough of

G——, when, to our great astonishment, Dolly marched into the hall, equipped in her best pelisse and bonnet, with a huge wax doll in one hand, and a coach and four with their outriders (the gift of Mr. Harman,) in the other. “Thtop!” shouted Dolly, perceiving that her new admirer, who was already mounted, was bowing himself off as fast as possible, “thtop! I go too!”

“No,” rejoined the faithless swain, “not now, dear Dolly; there’s no room; you see I’m on horseback: I’ll come back in a carriage and fetch you and your doll. I’ll come back for you to-morrow, Dolly.”

“I go *now*,” screamed Dolly. “I ride before—I ride behind. I oor wife!” quoth Dolly. But all in vain, for her treacherous admirer nodded, and kissed his hand, and galloped off; he laughed and he rode away, and poor Dolly, quite

astounded at anybody's being as fickle as herself, seemed likely to cry, till, catching a glimpse of Mr. Harman, who was now, in his turn, taking leave, she resumed her doll and her coach-and-four, which she had put down in her consternation, and then said very quietly, —
“ Well, then, Mither Harman, I go with oo.”

“ No,” rejoined Mr. Harman, “ not to-day, Miss Dolly. I'll come and fetch you another time ;” and off he bowed himself ; and poor Dolly, quite astounded with this great moral lesson on the dangers of flirtation, and the treachery of men, walked back to the nursery quite misanthropic, exclaiming, with the drollest possible union of mirth, of observation, and falseness of grammar, “ Manth ith all alike !” she being, perhaps, the first young lady of three years and a half old, who ever had occasion, on her own ac-

count, to verify the words of the old song,—

“Sigh no more, ladies, ladies, sigh no more,—

Men were deceivers ever ;

One foot on sea and one on shore,

To one thing constant never.”

“Manth ith all alike,” quoth poor Dolly, and off she marched to play with Tinv.

MARION CAMPBELL.

A HIGHLAND STORY.

“This jealousy
Is for a precious creature.”—SHAKSPEARE.

A MORE inquisitive race of dogs than the greyhound, breathes not upon this earth. Wanting the sense of smell which usually leads astray those four-footed people, who, like the best of the two-footed generation, have certain small and genial frailties mingled amongst their many virtues—lacking that temptation to step aside from the straight and beaten path, they indulge

their wandering propensities by poking their pretty noses into every crevice and cranny they can spy out, and following every indication of life or motion which their quick sense of seeing and hearing can detect on every side.

Many a dance has my lamented Mayflower led me, by her vagaries in this way; and, as greyhound nature will be greyhound nature under all varieties of coat or feature, I suspect that the fair Marion Campbell found her pet Luath—rough, wiry, bony, though he was, and of the sturdier and stronger sex—quite as unmanageable as I did my fair, sleek, delicate canine companion; although, in addition to all other points of difference, the good greyhound Mayflower happened to be a lady, and we all know that “the men-folk,” as a country friend of mine is pleased disparagingly to designate that important part of the creation, are pleased to arro-

gate to themselves a total deficiency in the great quality of curiosity.

I do not see that we "women-folk" have any business to quarrel with this assertion. If they who go clad in doublet and hose choose to make over to the wearers of boddice and petticoat the exclusive possession of the great faculty, which may be called the very key to knowledge, I can find no reason why we should disclaim a distinction so honourable; except, indeed, the trifling consideration called truth, may count for anything in the argument; in which case, I should feel myself bound to declare, that, according to my limited observation, the quality in question is about as equally divided between the sexes, as freely and bountifully scattered amongst all animals with any pretensions to intelligence, whether biped or quadruped, as any—what shall we call it?—any questionable virtue well can be.

That this same organ of inquisitiveness was as strongly developed in Marion Campbell's rough and faithful attendant, as in my delicate pet, was made unpleasantly conscious to his fair mistress during a ramble which she, accompanied only by Luath and her damsel Janet, (whose functions about the daughter of the old Highland chief much resembled those of a modern lady's-maid,) was taking through her native glens, one fine morning in August.

Marion passed along in silence; wrapt, sooth to say—as, in the heyday of her bloom, woman, from the princess to the peasant, is wont—in “maiden meditation,” which, in the presence at least, and, as I suspect, in a good many others, was, with all submission to the great poet, anything but “fancy free.”

Marion Campbell's meditations glanced over her mind, mingling and crossing, now

bright and now gloomy, like the tartan of her house, to which, indeed, that checkered and many-coloured web, a young lady's musings, may not unaptly be likened.

First she thought of a new sacque and petticoat of pale lilac damask, flowered with alternate bouquets of roses and carnations, the most magnificent habiliment that had ever penetrated north of Inverary; and of a Mechlin head and ruffles, brought her in a present by her kinsman Archibald—Cousin Archie, as she used to call him, when they were children together—now a captain in Kingston's dragoons; then she repeated to herself certain rhymes of the ingenious Mr. Moore, (upon that thin diet did the lovers of poetry banquet in those days,) whose "Fables for the Female Sex," published a year or two before, had just found their way into the Highlands; then the form of a heather sprig suggested an apron that she was

flowering to wear with the above-mentioned damask suit; then she thought of her poor friend Helen Cameron, sister of the chief of Dungallan, whose proficiency in the mysteries of the needle had been acquired in a French convent, and who had taken so much pains to accomplish her in the gentle science of tent-stitch and cross-stitch; then the horrors of civil war, the much that she had heard, and the little that she had seen, of the last year's miseries, (for the ramble of which we are speaking occurred in the '46,) came shudderingly over her mind, as a cloud passes across the sun.

“Poor, poor Helen!” thought Marion, sighingly; “Archibald used to be jealous of Dungallan. He had little cause, Heaven knows. I never thought of him, except as the brother of my friend, whatever might be his wishes with regard to me; and now, if, indeed, he be still alive, he is

chased like the hill fox or the hare, and has nowhere to lay his head. Poor Dunggallan ! poor, poor Helen ! Oh, the sickening horror of such a war as this has been !—kinsman with kinsman, friend with friend. And now this fearful search after a vanquished enemy !—this hunting down an old acquaintance, or, it may be, an honourable rival, like a beast of the field ! Oh, to a brave spirit, it must be misery !” sighed Marion to herself, imputing, as a tender woman so often does impute, her own feelings to the man whom she loves. “ Archibald must feel it so, in spite of his devotion to General Campbell (who has been as a father to him,) and his loyalty to King George. And now these fearful sentences !—that poor young girl who died of a broken heart at the execution of her lover !* They wring one’s very

* Vide Shenstone’s pathetic ballad of “ Jamie Dowson ; ” a story so touching, that even the false taste of the versifier has failed to spoil it.

soul. But Archibald has leave of absence now, for the cure of that old wound at Culloden, and will remain with us during the whole autumn; and no fugitive would be mad enough to come into the Campbell's country. Then, in the winter, my father talks of taking me to Edinburgh." And the lilac damask, with alternate bouquets of roses and carnations, flitted before the eyes of the fair wearer. "No one knows what may happen in the winter!" thought she; and visions of snow-white satin night-gowns, and white and silver brocades, the bridal paraphernalia of the time, gleamed, for an instant, in her mind's eye, calling forth a blush and a smile, a look and a feeling of innocent hope, which banished for the moment, the recollection that such things as war and misery had ever existed in this world of sunshine and shadow.

These were the musings which the

pranks and vagaries of Luath had interrupted.

First, he was aware of the motion of a moor-fowl among the heather, and he darted up the hill side with the speed of an arrow, giving to his fair lady, and still more to her serving maiden—who exerted her lungs most womanfully for his recovery, screaming at the top of a naturally high voice until the rocks echoed back the sound as if it had been the shriek of a mountain eagle — giving to his fair pursuers the exceedingly tormenting and provoking spectacle of moving away the faster the more he was called back. Then a deer shewed himself in the valley, and off he darted through the glen, with a rush that threatened to run down the whole herd ; while Janet's shrill pipe resounded through the uttermost depths of the glen, as it had before climbed the topmost ridge of the crags.

Then he contented himself with slighter deviations from the straight path, skipped from right to left, and from left to right, poking his nose into that nook and this cranny, until, at last, just as the bridal apparition had crossed Marion's fancy, he disappeared behind a small clump of brush-wood—two or three young birch trees, and a plant or two of yellow broom and Scotch brier that grew on the ledge of a cliff, down which, in winter, a mountain torrent made its way, and vanished bodily, or seemed to vanish, into the face of the rock.

The extraordinary disappearance of her favourite—followed as it was, first by a low sound from Luath, something between a bark and a growl, then by one or two muttered words, the speaker continuing invisible, and a slight noise of struggling—effectually aroused his fair mistress; who, naturally high-spirited, free-born, and

vigorous in mind and body, as becomes a mountain maid, plunged, without hesitation, into the stony bed of the torrent, now completely dried up by the summer sun ; and, scrambling with considerable difficulty, (for the loose stones gave way even under her light tread, and she was forced to grasp every instant at the tufts of grass and heather that grew in the fissures of the cliff, and hung over its sides, to keep herself from falling,) succeeded, after some minutes' hard climbing, in gaining the position which her pet had reached at half a dozen bounds, and found herself perched upon a narrow ledge of rock overhanging the water-course, at about twenty feet from the bottom of the precipice ; hardly wide enough to afford room to the little tuft of brushwood above which the cliff rose in a smooth, sheer ascent, until it seemed mingling with the clouds.

Behind this small clump of birch, and

broom, and briar, and now quite concealed by the summer foliage, was a small fissure, penetrating the natural mound, through which it was clear that Luath had disappeared, and into which she also passed, regardless alike of the dangers that she might encounter there, and of the warnings of Janet, who, climbing and remonstrating with equal good will, followed her lady as rapidly as a hearty tumble, which had unluckily befallen her at the commencement of her ascent, would permit.

A similar misadventure had very nearly occurred to her fair mistress, not aware, at the moment of her entrance, of the rapid shelving of the narrow passage into the cave in which it terminated. She recovered herself, however, and found, by the light which penetrated through the fissure, (the only light which the place afforded,) that she was in a natural cavern, of considerable extent, and immediately

confronted by a young man, who stood directly opposite to her, with an air and attitude of calm determination, one hand vigorously planted upon Luath's neck, and the other grasping a pistol which he had drawn from his belt.

Both were instantly relaxed as he perceived the sex of the intruder.

"A woman!" exclaimed he, replacing the pistol in his girdle, whilst Luath, in a transport of pleasure, sprang upon Marion's shoulder, and nestled his rough head against her cheek. "A lady! then I have nothing to fear." And, with a courtesy which seemed habitual, he dragged a block of smooth stone, the only thing resembling a seat which the cave afforded, to a level spot near his fair visitor, and entreated her to take possession of it, in an accent whose gentle cheerfulness contrasted singularly with his rude and squalid aspect.

Marion, complying with his request,

gazed upon him, as he stood before her, with a mixture of wonder and compassion. He was a tall young man, of a fair complexion, or rather a complexion which, before a long exposure to sun, and wind, and weather, had been fair; and a countenance which, in spite of a tremendous length of beard, had something at once singular and agreeable. He wore an old dark tartan coat, a plaid, and a philibeg, with a pistol and a dirk at his side. His garments were torn and dirty, his feet all but bare, and his whole appearance indicated the extremity of human privation.

“One of those unhappy sufferers!” thought Marion, as her bright eyes filled with tears. “So might my father and my poor cousin Archibald”—even in her silent thoughts, she did not call him by a tenderer name—“so might they have wandered in their enemy’s country, and

have hidden in caves and rocks, had the day of Culloden ended differently."

"It is only my maid, sir — one for whose discretion I can answer," said Marion, aloud, as the entrance of Janet, and her exclamation of alarm and astonishment at sight of the stranger, produced a less emphatic expression of surprise on his part. "I will answer for her as for myself," said Marion, warmly.

"Heaven forbid that I should doubt of either!" responded the stranger. "Wherever, during my wanderings, I have met a woman, there I have been sure to find a friend. Pity and fidelity are synonymous with her name."

"How can we serve you?" said Marion, glancing towards the interior of the cave, where some heather, arranged with the blossoms upwards, the hardy couch of the Highlander, and the remains of a wood fire, gave token of a residence of some duration. You seem to want"——

“Almost everything, madam!” interrupted he, gaily. “For my wardrobe, you see its condition: witness my two feet, with half a brogue between them. Never was barefooted friar in fitter order for a pilgrimage. And as to my larder, that is reduced to a still lower ebb, as these few crumbs may bear testimony. I doubt if the leanest begging brother of St. Francis was ever so sparely furnished. I have been thinking, indeed, of making an onslaught upon your venison. I must have attempted it to-night, from sheer starvation, though the report of fire-arms”——

“Would bring upon you twenty armed men,” rejoined Marion—“would produce instant discovery, perhaps instant death! Heaven be praised you refrained, and that Luath’s curiosity led us here to supply your wants. If it had been my father!”

“Or if Captain Archibald had happened

to gang alang wi' Miss Marion the now, instead of me," interposed Janet—"whilk wasna unlikely, ye ken!"

"Hush, Janet!" resumed her mistress, blushing. "We have no time to waste in talk. They may miss us at home, and"—

"Eh! Miss Marion, but ye are richt!" exclaimed the incorrigible lady's maid. "The captain 'ill miss ye sure enoo, sae sune as he has dune thae weary letters. We hae nae time for clavers. He'll be seeking ye up the brae and doun the brae; and the loun Donald, the captain's man"—

"He'll be seeking after somebody else—will he not?" inquired the stranger, who had listened with an air of suppressed amusement, and sly, quiet intelligence, not a little provoking to the fair Marion, to the revelations of her waiting woman.

"He'll be following his master's good

example, and seeking up the brae and down the brae for you? Won't he, Mistress Janet?"

"Janet! hold your peace, I entreat you!" cried her lady, interrupting something that the chattering damsel was about to say, "Tell me, sir, and quickly, for the very moments are precious, how we can best serve you. With provisions, we can, I hope, supply you after dark."

"The tae half of a red deer pasty, sin' the gentleman fancies the meat, and a tass of whiskey, gin the loun Donald hae left sae mickle in the castle, for he's a fou frae morn till nicht," quoth Janet.

"Unless our prolonged absence should excite suspicion, there is little doubt but we shall be able to supply you with food. Linen and shoes also can be procured from my father's wardrobe. But I ought to tell you, inhospitable as it seems, that your continuance here is attended with

danger the most imminent. I feel that I am speaking to one of the unfortunate followers of the Pre—— of Charles Edward,” continued she, checking herself, as her listener drew himself up proudly ; “and it is right to inform him that he is in the very midst of Argyle’s country, surrounded by enemies on all sides, parties of soldiers in every direction, and an officer in the service of the King—nay, this is no time to quarrel for a word with one who is risking much to preserve you—an officer in King George’s service actually in the castle. What madness brought you hither? You must not, cannot remain here. The same accident that discovered your retreat to us, may make it known to others. And then——

The horrors of the executions at Kennington—an account of which, transmitted to her cousin by a friend from London, she had that morning overheard him reading to

her father—struck at once upon her mind. She thought of the young man before her, evidently well-born and delicately nurtured, who, for a wrong cause it might be, but still for one which he thought right, was enduring so cheerfully the extremity of human privation—she thought of him, to-day talking with her, full of life and spirit, to-morrow undergoing the fearful sentence at which her flesh had crept as she heard it ; and unable to bear the image which her fancy had conjured up, she burst suddenly into a passion of tears.

Much affected by her sensibility, the object of her generous interest laid aside his levity and his haughtiness, and explained to her, simply and gravely, that, having been closely and unrelentingly pursued for many weeks, he had taken a sudden resolution to baffle, if possible, the sagacity of his enemies, by leaving the friendly country in which he had hitherto

taken refuge, and planting himself in the very stronghold of his foes. The actual spot in which he was concealed had been suggested, he said, by the local knowledge of a companion, who had left him on the double errand of obtaining important intelligence and recruiting their stock of provisions ; but whose return, unless he himself prevented his arrival by meeting him at a rendezvous some twenty miles distant, he expected to take place two days after. This companion was, he added, no stranger to Miss Marion Campbell, whom he believed himself to have the honour of addressing, and to whom the house of Dungallan was certainly not unknown.

“Eh, puir Dungallan !” exclaimed Janet, whose sympathy extended to all her mistress’s lovers. “We ken him weel, guid man ! he gied me the vera brooch that ye see i’ my pladdie, in return for an

auld gluve that he stealt of my leddy's forbye ither tokens. Puir Dungallan!—sae it was he that fand the cove! He kent the place langsyne, did Dungallan; frae the time that he was a bairn, nae higher than the hound Luath. An' ye look for him the morn's morrow! Eh, sirs, but we maun pit a ewe-milk cheese an' a wheen bannocks, to the pasty—he'll be just famished—to sae naething of anither tass of the whisky."

"Let him not come, I beseech you," said Marion, earnestly. "His danger would be ten-fold greater than yours. He is known. He is one of the chiefs of the Camerons—one of the principal planners of this unhappy insurrection; and said, also, to be a personal favourite of its unfortunate leader. I have known Dungallan all my life long. His sister was my early companion and instructress. Let me not have the misery of fearing that an

old friend of my father's house should be dragged from his lands to a dreadful death. If he were taken, nothing could save him. My interest in him would be misconstrued. It would be thought—Heaven knows how falsely!—but it would be thought”—proceeded Marion, in a low tone, and blushing deeply—“I know that it would be suspected. Only this very morning, when I spoke of poor Helen, the feeling burst forth. His presence, whilst my hot-headed kinsman is at the castle, would, indeed, be dangerous to us all.”

“As fire to tow,” corroborated Janet, “Guid sirs! I had clean forgot the captain. He's ganging gyte upon that score. He garred the soldier lads tak auld Alison—who's as deaf as the stanes in the linn—to Inverary, to be examined, because the auld wife had a wee bit mutch of Cameron tartan, that the guidman had picked up at Falkirk, to cover her pair

withered craig. No ! no ! — Dungallan maunna come hither. The captain wad jalouse that he was hereabout, by instinct, ye ken, just as Luath wad jalouse a brock or a tod by the mere effect of natural antepathy.”

At this moment, the stranger—observing that Luath, who had hitherto stood quietly, and apparently half asleep, by the side of his mistress, pricked up his ears, and held his head slightly on one side, in the attitude of listening—laid his right hand firmly on his neck ; and, in another instant, a quick step was heard in the glen below, succeeded by a loud, lively whistle, and a bold, manly voice calling, “Luath ! Where are you, Luath, my man ?” at short intervals. It was with considerable difficulty that the caresses of his lady, and the strong grasp of her companion, could restrain Luath from obeying the call. The footsteps were heard dashing through the loose, dry, gravelly bed of

the wintry torrent; pausing a moment, as if the passer by were observing the marks made by the girls in their recent ascent, or as if his attention were attracted by the suppressed growls of Luath, or his repeated plunges, as he struggled with all his strength to escape from his holders; and in that moment—a moment that seemed an age—both Marion and Janet fancied that he might have heard the quick beating of their throbbing hearts. At length the sound of the footsteps died away; and the voice and the whistle grew fainter and fainter, and were gradually lost in the distance. For the present, at least, the danger was past.

After a long pause, Janet ventured a whisper.

“Yon’s Captain Archibald, calling Luath, puir fellow—be quiet, Luath, can’t ye?—just to find whereabout Miss Marion may be. Eh, sirs!—there’d be wild wark, I trow, gin he and Dungallan should forgather!”

Their new acquaintance appeared to feel the full force of this observation.

“Well,” said he, “I must, if possible, be off to-night. Heaven forbid that I should lead my faithful friend, or you, my kind protectress, into unnecessary danger! Supply me—if, without peril to yourselves you can do so—with so much of the commonest food as may give me strength for the journey, and a pair of shoes to guard my feet from the rocks and briars, and the tass of whisky which Mistress Janet spoke of, to drink your health and happiness—and I will set forth this very night.”

“Ye ken the road?” inquired Janet.

“I have passed it once; and have learnt, in my wanderings, almost with the skill of a wild Indian, to fix in my memory the great landmarks of nature—the outlines of the mountains, the course of the streams, and the positions of the stars in the heavens; nay, even to follow

upon the trail of a companion, by the aid of almost imperceptible signs—a transverse cut upon the smooth bark of the mountain ash, a birch twig broken, a sprig of heather dropped upon the path — tokens which, even now that I have indicated them to you, none but an eye quickened by keen necessity and present danger could clearly apprehend. Oh, this necessity is the schoolmistress of all others, to sharpen observation, and teach a man the use of his wits ! We may dwell in a palace all our lives, and not know for what purpose our senses were given us ; but turn us, barefoot and hungry, amongst these Scottish wildernesses, and we soon find that the chief aim and object of our faculties is to enable us to make a shift—in which grand art of existence I'll challenge any canny Scot, Lowlander or Highlander, from John o'Groat's House to the Tweed. It will be moonlight to-night," added he,

more seriously, "and I have little doubt of finding my way to the place where I have appointed to join my friend. So now, my fair benefactress, I will detain you no longer."

And he took her hand, and bent his lips to it with an habitual grace and dignity; the effect of which was not at all diminished by his rude and squalid exterior, so independent of mere extrinsic circumstances are those qualities of mind and manner—that union of suavity and nobleness—which constitute a gentleman. Marion lingered.

"The night is, of all seasons, the most dangerous to a traveller, in these troubled times. Even the fact of being out in the dark exposes the wanderer to suspicion. Could no disguise be thought of that should enable you to elude suspicion by day?—a female garb, for instance?"

"The gentleman shall be welcome to

my best kirtle and boddice, and a hood and screen to the wale of it," quoth Janet. "Eh, and he'll mak a braw strappin lassie !"

"A woman !" replied the fugitive, quickly. "There you must excuse me. Anything but that. Braggart that I was, I forgot my failure in that line. I'll play the woman no more."

"No more !" And Marion gazed fixedly on his face, whilst a fresh suspicion crossed her mind, and the colour mounted even to her temples. "No more !"

"But he maunna leave the cave, by daylight, in a plaid and phillibeg of the Cameron set. Gin he does, the captain, or the loun Donald 'ill hoist him ahint a dragoon, and carry him awa to Inverary, like puir doited Alison. There's walth o' auld tartans about the town, belonging to ae laddie or anither ; and I can lift him a suit as cannily as ever my forbears lifted a

drove o' black cattle," said Janet, laughing. "And then, when he has trimmed that beard o' his, whilk wad be as kenspeckle in a kilt as in a kirtle, he may pass for as douce a Campbell, honest man, as Locheden himsel'."

"My father went this morning to a small hunting-lodge, and, having accidentally left Luath behind, one of the lads who attended him ran back to desire that, unless my cousin should follow him to-morrow—which it must be my care to prevent—the dog might be sent after him in the morning. Luckily, the messenger met Janet before arriving at the castle, and, after delivering his message to her, returned immediately to his master; so that, if your route, sir, should lie in that direction, or in whatsoever direction your route may lie—for it will be better for both of us that I should remain in my present ignorance—your safety will be

best assured by taking Luath, who is known to the whole country; and a note from myself to my father, which would be your warrant with any parties of the soldiery whom you might chance to meet. So soon as you shall be clear of present danger, set Luath free. He will speedily run home; and his appearance will be a token—a most welcome token—of your safety. Should you be taken, I rely upon your honour to declare my dear father's ignorance of this transaction. My own share in it I am ready to abide."

Once again, and with deep emotion, he for whose sake she was risking so much, and who felt that she was herself fully conscious of the peril which she incurred, lifted her hand to his lips, as she stood on the ledge of rock at the entrance of the cave, ready to attempt the precipitous descent.

"A poor and homeless fugitive thanks

you, madam. The result of a more fortunate attempt may one day enable him to return, in his own behalf, or in that of him whom he represents, some part of this obligation. When that time shall arrive, send but a leaf of this flower"——And he plucked a lingering blossom of the wild briar that straggled into the cave, and presented it to her.

Marion turned towards him with gentle dignity.

"God forbid that any wild and idle words should lessen the readiness and satisfaction with which I tender my poor assistance to an enemy in distress! But if any circumstance could diminish those feelings, it would be the finding him—even in this moment of extremest wretchedness, when the blood of his bravest friends is flowing like water, and the lives of weak and helpless women are perilled, by the endeavour to save him from a simi-

lar fate—looking forward, with exulting hope, to a renewal of these scenes of agony. Oh, sir ! if you be, as your words import, of high and legitimate influence with him in whose name this expedition has been carried on, represent to him the utter desolation which it has brought upon this unhappy land ! Warn him against incurring, for that thorny wreath, a crown, the tremendous responsibility of another such convulsions. Whatever be the abstract justice of his claim, the truest titles to a throne—the blessing of God, and the love of the people—rest with the House of Brunswick ; and he and his gallant son will find a nobler greatness, a sweeter peace, in a patient acquiescence in the will of Providence and the voice of the nation, than in efforts which can but end in the slaughter of their bravest and their most faithful followers, and in rending asunder the ties of friendship and of kindred, from

the castle to the hut. Save this devoted country from the recurrence of scenes heart-rending alike to friend and to foe, and take with you my prayers and my blessings. Blushing at her own earnestness, she stopped suddenly. "I accept your flower," added she, in calmer tone, "not as an emblem—yet, see, the leaves are already falling!—but as a memorial. Janet and Luath shall be with you as soon as they can steal away after nightfall. Farewell!"

And, attended by her faithful adherents, she stepped into the narrow bed formed by the waters, and slowly and cautiously gained the path beneath.

"Strange, yet noble creature!" muttered the fugitive to himself, as he stood at the entrance of the cavern, watching her descent. "She has not made any promise of secrecy; but one feels that a woman like that might be trusted with

more than life. I'faith ! one might envy the Elector of Hanover and Captain Archibald Campbell such a subject and such a mistress. The rose was dropping, did she say ? Flowers are but foolish emblems. There is an eagle, one of the same sort that hovered above the vessel as we approached the Scottish shore. Tullibardine pointed it out to me at the time. That were a fitter symbol ; and that sails on." And, catching, as ambition is wont to catch, at such auguries, he watched the flight of the kingly bird, soaring upward until it was lost in the distance ; and then, cheered by the omen, retired into his place of refuge, with his usual *sang froid*, where excellent, as he had himself boasted, at making a shift, he speedily kindled some dry sticks, by snapping the lock of his pistol, and setting light, by that means, to the stump of a tobacco pipe, lengthened sufficiently for use by the insertion of a

tube of oaten straw, applied himself vigorously to the task of stifling the sense of present ennui and future danger, and the still more pressing claims of a keen appetite in the fumes of the "fragrant weed."

Marion, on her part, flushed and agitated, contrived to reach home, unsuspected. She walked straight into the small room that she was accustomed to call her parlour, which contained what little property a Highland lady of that day could call her own; and Miss Marion Campbell's possessions in that way were the admiration of Argyleshire.

She boasted, besides the ordinary complement of high-backed chairs, narrow settees, and diminutive tea-tables, a harpsichord, a scrutoire surmounted with glass doors, serving at once for writing-desk and book-case, and furnished with the usual limited female library; a japan

cabinet, well stuffed with choice china, mixed with divers curiosities, natural and artificial, of questionable beauty, and not remarkable for preservation; a glass case of gorgeous humming birds; and a gilt cage, containing a recent gift of her cousin—a bullfinch of great tameness, and such extraordinary accomplishments, that he not only drew his own water in an ingenious bucket constructed for the purpose, but attested his loyalty by piping very successfully the whole of the national anthem, from the first bar to the last, and had completely won the old piper's affections, by making certain indistinct and far-off efforts to catch the notes of the "Gathering of the Clan," as performed by him for a full hour every morning, walking up and down in front of the hall door. Dutch tiles decorated the chimney, India paper covered the walls, and the little apartment had a look of snugness

and comfort, hardly to have been expected amongst the wild hills of the north. The starry white jessamine, the everlasting pea, and the hardy purple clematis—

“The favoured flower
That bears the name of virgin’s bower”—

were trained round the windows; and a half glass door opened upon a sheltered flower-plot, bordered with thrift, and gay with pinks, larkspurs, sweet-williams, and garden lilies, intermixed with tall rose trees and carefully-trained bushes of Dutch honeysuckle, each almost as short, and quite as round, as a Dutch cheese; whilst another door, on the opposite side of the room, led, by a narrow winding staircase, to her sleeping chamber above.

It was a very complete lady’s apartment; although most of the advantages of its insulation, and its power of egress from the castle without the knowledge of the other inhabitants, had hitherto been

thrown away upon its fair possessor. She now decided that Janet and Luath should pass through the glass door, when setting forth on their moonlight expedition. There was, to be sure, a wall round one side of the little flower garden into which it opened; whilst, on the other, it sank abruptly to the lake from which her father derived his territorial title; but that wall was in so precarious a state, and Janet so strong and active, that there was little doubt of her surmounting the difficulty. As to Luath, he would clear it at a bound.

Sunny and cheerful was Marion's little parlour, with its in-door comforts and luxuries, and its out-door prettinesses, its pleasant garden, and its sidelong peep of the calm clear waters, shut in by sheltering hills; and cheerful and sunny had been the temper with which the young Scottish maiden—high-born, healthful, and fair, the beloved and only daughter of

a kind and indulgent father, the betrothed bride of the man whom she loved best in the world—had been wont to return to it, to pursue her ordinary avocations, after her daily ramble among the mountains, or by the lake side.

Now her mood was changed. Anxious, uneasy, unquiet, the secret with which she had become acquainted—a secret which she felt must be imparted to no one, save her faithful Janet—must be held sacred at every risk—weighed upon her like a sin. She sate down to her scrutoire, with the double purpose of depositing, in one of its little recesses, the half-fallen rose, (for, with the softened feeling so natural to a woman, when rendering, at a great risk, a great service, she had already relented towards him by whom it had been presented,) and of writing the important billet, which, with Luath, was to form his passport; but, harassed with

doubts whether, in following the impulse of the moment, she had done right or wrong, and weighed down by the horrible responsibility belonging to her situation, she had no sooner folded the flower carefully in silver paper, and cleared one of the pigeon-holes for its reception, than, with an irresistible movement of self-pity, mingled, it may be, with a shade of self-distrust, she laid her head upon her hand, and burst into tears.

Her heart, somewhat relieved by that great female comfort and privilege, a hearty fit of crying, she lifted up her head, with the intention of writing her letter forthwith, and chasing the subject, as much as might be, from her mind, when her attention was arrested by a packet, which she had dislodged from its place in depositing the token-flower, and which had unrolled itself in falling, and now lay open before her eyes.

It was a water-colour drawing, of great finish and beauty, executed by Helen, and representing the two friends in a glen near the castle. Marion, richly dressed, was seated in the foreground; one little hand thrown round the neck of the faithful Luath, whose honest countenance, always animated and intelligent, was awakened into double life by the report of Dungallan's gun, whose figure was seen farther down the glen, firing at a red deer, bounding by. Helen had drawn herself in profile, standing behind her companion, accoutred in plaid and boddice, as a Highland lassie, and setting off, by her darker complexion and simpler garb, the delicate and swanlike loveliness of the young beauty of Locheden.

Even in this picture, the unselfish and amiable character of the artist might be traced. Herself eminently handsome, she had cast into the shade her own graceful

figure and noble features, and had given all her care to heighten the charms of her friend.

Marion's spirits, already weakened, could not resist the flood of recollection that burst upon her at sight of this drawing, and of some stanzas which had served it for an envelope; slight, but graceful verses, in which the poet had mingled, with fond praises of his sister's skill as a portrait painter, very intelligent hints of his own devotion to the fair original.

"Poor Helen!" sighed she; "poor, poor Dungallan!"

The sigh was echoed from behind her, and turning round, with a shock of nervous trepidation, she saw her Cousin Archibald leaning upon her chair.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Campbell, for daring to look over you," said he, somewhat stiffly; "but having, after despatching answers to communications of

some consequence, sought you in your usual works, and receiving, upon my returning to the castle, the most contradictory answers to my questions as to your 'whereabout,' I was tempted, by the open door, and the sight of my friend Luath, to use my old privilege of the *entrée*, and make my appearance in your withdrawing room. Old Angus informed me that you were walking, and well; Mistress Janet, on the contrary, said that you were at home and indisposed; and, without intending, believe me, to intrude upon meditations which were clearly not intended to meet the general eye, I could not resist the temptation to inquire personally, which of the two reports was correct."

"Both were right, to a certain point," said Marion, with some effort. "I walked out, as I generally do, after breakfast, and returned, not ill, indeed, but less well than usual."

“It pleased Mistress Janet to deny that you had been out at all,” persisted Archibald drily ; eyeing, with no good will, the waiting damsel, who had, by this time, made her way into the apartment, and was busying herself in collecting her lady’s bonnet and shawl. “However, to let that matter rest. I wished to warn you against rambling about unattended, at this particular time. Intelligence has been received that one of the prime leaders in this rebellion, the very chief over whose portrait, conjoined with your own, I find you weeping, has been traced to this neighbourhood.”

“Eh, sirs ! Dungallan ! Guidness save him, puir chiel, frae thae bloody redcoats !” was the ejaculation of Janet.

“Whether there be more truth in the exploded doctrine of sympathies than it suits the philosophers of this enlightened age to admit,” continued Archibald, doggedly, “or whether the interest which you

and Mistress Janet there, are pleased to testify in his fate, together with this mysterious walk, may serve to solve the enigma of his lurking about a place so remote from his own country, and apparently surrounded by enemies, remains to be determined. At all events, the coincidence is curious."

"My grateful affection for his sister, the daughter of my poor mother's dearest friend, the friend and instructress of my own childhood, might well account for any interest that I might take in Dungallan's fate," said Marion, rousing herself as she perceived the effect which her passive dejection and silent acquiescence in his suspicions, was producing upon the jealous temper of her lover. "If he fell a victim to these cruel, cruel laws, poor Helen's happiness would be ruined for ever."

"Sisters are convenient persons," observed Captain Campbell. "I am unfor-

tunate in not possessing one; although, even if I were happy enough to boast a relation as accomplished as Miss Helen Cameron, I should lack the skill to set off her presents with a garnish of love verses. I am none of "these same metre ballad-mongers, thank Heaven!" added he, with increasing bitterness. "I am of Hotspur's mind, and

'Had rather hear a brazen candlestick turned,
Or a dry wheel grate on the axletree;
And that would nothing set my teeth on edge,
Nothing so much as mincing poetry.' "

"As for my walk, this morning," began Marion, desirous of turning the conversation, "that"—Fettered by the recollection of all that had passed in that morning's walk, and heart-struck by the sternness of his gaze, her voice faltered, and she suddenly stopped.

"What have I done, Archibald, that you should look at me and speak to me so

unkindly ? ” said she, after a short pause, turning to him, with the tears streaming down her cheeks, and a sweetness and earnestness of manner that won its way instantly to the lover’s heart. He soothed and apologised, and, before they parted to dress for dinner, a perfect reconciliation had taken place, and he had vowed, for the fiftieth time, never again to suffer a shade of jealousy to pass across his mind.

Such vows are easily made ; but to keep them requires a cooler temperament than that of Archibald Campbell : twenty times, that very afternoon, was the stifled passion upon the brink of bursting forth.

We must all have felt, even although we may have been fortunate enough not to have a secret of life and death in our charge, like poor Marion, how difficult it is, when the mind is filled with one subject, to keep up an easy and unembarrassed

conversation upon any other; the more especially when our companion is one to whom we have been accustomed to confide every thought as it happened to arise. In such a situation, not only is our behaviour embarrassed and constrained, but there is a sort of spell over our faculties, so that, in steering clear of the one great danger, we run foul of all sorts of minor perils, and say and do, we hardly know what, in a vain endeavour to cover the awkwardness of our real position.

In the present case, for instance, Marion affected an exuberance of animal spirits, depressing, rather than exhilarating, to the listener; and as different from her general easy cheerfulness, as the rouge of a haggard court beauty, from the natural colouring of youth and health. She rattled on the harpsichord, with a rapidity which put melody quite out of the question, the liveliest tunes that she could recollect; sang,

in a voice from which her usual arch sweetness was banished by agitation, the gayest of her national songs ; choosing, quite unconsciously to herself, but in a manner which her auditor did not fail to remark, such airs as she had been accustomed to sing with Helen, and those which had been the particular favourites of her brother ; and when, at last, she had quite exhausted herself with the exertion, she rose from the harpsichord, and, taking up the apron that she was flowering, requested that he would read to her while she worked, as Dungallan used to do to Helen.

It was now the Captain's turn to show that a *tete-à-tete* between two lovers is not always so saccharine a matter as is erroneously supposed.

Turning over the newest books that he could find amongst her collection, he lighted upon Richardson's great novel, then in course of publication, the unknown catas-

trophe of which excited so much curiosity and interest, not merely amidst the flower-bed of young ladies by whom the author was surrounded, but amongst some score of persons of quality, who despatched letter after letter (one of them—Lady Bradshaigh—even writing upon her knees) to ask for the reformation of the hero, and a happy conclusion to the story, with as earnest supplications, and as strong reasons to back their petition, as if they had been pleading for the real, actual, life-long felicity of two real, actual, living and existing human beings—the strongest tribute, by the way, to the power of the book, to its extraordinary verisimilitude and truthfulness, ever received by any author.

One of Lovelace's most characteristic letters did Captain Campbell address himself to read, avoiding, with the instinct of a high-bred gentleman, all that could be painful to female delicacy, and giving to

the racy wit, the eloquent sophistry of that remarkable creation of Richardson's genius, all the advantage of the most intelligent and animated elocution; so that Marion's attention was excited, in spite of herself.

"What a wretch!" exclaimed she, as he finished the account of one of his most teasing interviews with poor Clarissa. "What a cruel, unfeeling, cold-hearted wretch!"

"I don't know that," replied Archibald. (Be it remembered, in vindication of my hero, that only four volumes out of the eight had yet been published, and that Lovelace's final resolution was still in suspense.) "I don't know that. The lady seems to me to have been quite as cold-hearted as the gentleman; or, rather, hearts on both sides seem to have been pretty much out of the question. She, justly, as you will say, distrusted his honour; and he, with at least as much

justice, doubted of her affection. The whole affair seems to me a game of chess, at which—barring false moves, which it is the author's business to guard against—the most skilful player will be sure to prove victorious. All you ladies exclaim, 'Poor Clarissa!' and, if she had loved him, I should be as ready as the best of you to echo the cry. But love is synonymous with confidence, and this paragon of her sex does not know what the word means. If she had relied upon him!—if she had trusted him! One wonders that Richardson did not see how much his book would have gained in interest by representing Clarissa as enamoured of Lovelace; but he lives amongst ladies, and piques himself, it is said, upon his knowledge of the female heart; and, therefore, it is not wonderful that he should show them as he sees them, and as they are," added he bitterly, "delighting in tormenting those

that love them best. Poor Clarissa, indeed ! rather, poor Lovelace !”

At this moment, it was some relief to Marion, whose apron had certainly not improved by her afternoon's labours, that the weather, which had been louring all the afternoon, now assumed the appearance of one of the terrific storms of those mountain regions. The evening closed in prematurely, the clouds gathered dark and heavy, the wind moaned in gusts through the dark firs, and swept across the lake, whilst quick flashes of sharp, rapid lightning gleamed at the edge of the horizon, and the growl of distant thunder, proclaimed, in Nature's awfulest voice, the gathering of the coming tempest.

The momentary passions of men were hushed before it. The lover sate, contemplating, by the fitful glare of the lightning, the fair face of his beloved, pallid and sad from anxiety and sorrow ; and once again his heart smote him for his unkindness.

“Marion, dearest Marion, do not you play the distrustful maiden with me, who, Heaven knows, have no desire upon this earth, but your happiness and honour! Be frank with me—confide in me, I conjure you! I see, I know, that there is a secret that weighs upon your mind at this moment. Trust it to me, and you shall not repent your reliance. Shew me but what you wish, and it shall be done. My power in this district is greater than you know of; my intelligence more accurate than you suspect. Say only, ‘Dungallan is my friend’s brother, and therefore I wish to save him;’ say even, ‘Dungallan is my own early friend—and he shall be saved.’ Only think me worthy of your confidence, and see how I will deserve it. Nay; even—although the thought be fatal to my every hope of happiness—even if his danger have revealed to you feelings hitherto unsuspected, and if, in aiding his escape, I give

assistance to a favoured rival—yet, for your dear sake, to spare you the misery you would feel if he were taken, I swear to befriend him, at whatever peril it may be. I am not now on service, and there is only one of those unfortunate fugitives whom it would be eternal dishonour for a soldier to preserve. For Dungallan, since your happiness seems bound up in his safety, I will not hesitate to risk rank, fortune, life itself. Only trust me, only confide in me, if not as your devoted lover, yet as your nearest kinsman, your truest friend! Speak to me, I conjure you, Marion! I beseech you,—speak!”

He hung over her affectionately, as he delivered, with an earnest truthfulness that could not be mistaken, this outburst of fond and disinterested love, gazing in her face as he spoke, and grasping, with all the fervour of passion, her cold and trembling hands.

“Will you not answer me? Do you disdain even to reply to my offer of service—my most sincere and honest offer? You do! I see plainly that you do! I see and feel, too plainly, that you desire my absence; and I will no longer intrude upon your privacy. Farewell, madam! May you find a truer and a more devoted heart than that which you have spurned from you!”

And, lingering a moment on the threshold, in the hope, it may be, of being recalled, he left the room.

Marion wrung her hands in bitterness of vexation. Never had her heart so yearned towards the kinsman, the friend, the betrothed bridegroom, whom she had suffered to leave her, probably for ever.

“Oh, that I dared to undeceive him! But, for his own sake, I dare not, I must not. I have pledged myself to this adventure, and I must abide the trial. May

the God of mercy—who has willed that we should assist a fellow-creature in distress, who has gifted woman with a strength of sympathy which almost counterbalances her feebleness of body—may He grant that I bear it with firmness! It is a fearful night, Janet,” continued she, addressing the faithful soubrette, who just now entered the apartment, “Janet, do you fear to encounter the storm? If you do, say so honestly, and I will go myself. I have no right to impose upon your kindness and fidelity a danger from which I should shrink. There is little left, Heaven knows, that should make me cling to life. Speak frankly, my good girl. If your heart fails you, say so at once.”

Janet's answer was bold and confident. And, somewhat soothed by the fearless readiness of her confidante, her predictions that they should succeed in their enterprise, and that all jealousies and suspicions

would be ultimately cleared up (for her acuteness did not fail to detect the chief source of her lady's despondency), Marion sat down to write, with more firmness than she had expected to be able to command, the important billet to her father, which, in case of the fugitive being intercepted by the soldiers, would, she believed, from the respect paid to the name of one of the most loyal and most powerful chiefs of the powerful and loyal house of Campbell, prove an effectual and unquestionable passport.

Her letter was short and simple; stating only that, as Captain Archibald Campbell had resolved not to join Locheden in his hunting expedition, she had sent Luath by the bearer; that all was well at the Castle; and that, wishing good sport to her dear father, she hoped to see him return in a few days.

Armed with this document, and laden

with the promised provisions, the venison pasty and the whisky ("lifted," to use Janet's own phrase), together with a certain pair of "shoon," belonging to her lover, Donald, plaid garments of the Campbell set, and a collar and chain for Luath, the faithful waiting damsel, followed by the no less faithful hound, took the opportunity of a lull in the storm to set forth upon her expedition.

Marion accompanied them as far as the garden wall, which Janet and her four-footed attendant cleared with somewhat more of difficulty than she had anticipated, and then returned alone to her solitary apartment, to start at every sound, and feel each moment, as it passed, marked by the beatings of her own anxious heart.

Sadly and wearily the hours dragged along. The tempest had returned with tenfold violence; and Marion, as she found the noises in the castle subsiding, one by one, giving token that the inhabi-

tants had retired to rest, and that she remained the only watcher within its walls—whilst over the pelting rain and moaning wind without, burst ever and anon peals of thunder, reverberating in awful grandeur amongst the mountains, preceded by lightning that glared with livid and horrible lustre through the room—began to feel the pressure of a close-clinging fear, a down-weighting responsibility, as the possible fate of her attached dependent flashed across her mind. If her courage should give way as she returned alone, and she should fall in the darkness from the ledge of the rock! If the springs on the hill-top should rise suddenly, and, joining the gatherings from the pouring rain, gush down the channel of the winter water-course! If she should be struck by the lightning! Either of these thoughts was too terrible to dwell upon.

The distant clap of a door within the

mansion, followed, as she thought (for the dizzying boundings of her own pulses, the throbbings of her heart and brain, were such as to confuse all outward sounds) by the rapid footsteps of a man along the galleries and through the vaulted passages of the old building, harbingered yet another fear. If Janet should be pursued ! If she should be intercepted ! If the stranger should be discovered ! She heard, or she thought she heard, the castle gate unfastened ; and, the feeling of suspense becoming insupportable, she ventured to open gently the door of her little parlour, when a rush of wind, as if from an outer door left open, extinguished her taper, and left her in all the horror that a darkness as of midnight, interrupted only by the now less frequent flashes of the lightning, could add to her former terror.

The storm was at length abating. She found her way to the glass door, and

opened it; and after an interval that seemed to last hours rather than minutes, she was aware of Luath, as he came bounding up the path, followed—could it be the footsteps of two persons that she heard, advancing with stealthy rapidity? A moment decided the question. Janet rushed fearfully in, dragging after her, her, as it seemed, unwilling companion; and, first carefully locking and bolting the door, and barring the shutters, an operation which, in spite of the darkness, she performed with singular dexterity, she then contrived to thrust the stranger (for it was no other) up the staircase leading to Marion's sleeping apartment; and, having locked that door also, and deposited the key in her pocket, began relating to her lady, in cautious whispers, but with her usual volubility, the causes which had induced her to resolve upon the bold measure of bringing him to the castle.

They had been pursued. The rain had rendered the descent from the cave so dangerous, and had so flooded the path below, that the fugitive, forgetting his own danger in the manly duty of protecting a female, had insisted, in spite of Janet's earnest remonstrances, on escorting her as far at least as the wall over which she had effected her exit from the castle gardens. The light, shielded from the action of the wind by an ingeniously-contrived lanthorn of oiled paper, by the aid of which he had contrived to obtain for her a safe footing down the face of the precipice, had, she imagined, been observed from the upper windows of the castle.

Certain it was, that, before they reached the spot to which the fugitive had insisted upon accompanying her, they had heard footsteps at some distance behind them, and had, as the clouds partially cleared away, and the moon emerged for a few

moments, been enabled to perceive that their pursuer was a soldier. Janet declared her conviction that it must be either "Captain Archie himsel", or the loun Donald," come to reclaim "the plaidie and shoon," which she had boasted, with so much glee, of having "lifted" from her military admirer, a few hours before. Some one from the house it certainly was; for Luath had recognized him, and, giving a sudden jerk to the chain by which he was held, had succeeded in freeing himself, and bounding towards the intruder, although he had returned to them upon hearing her voice.

Under these circumstances, the active waiting-maid had, with great presence of mind, availed herself of a stunted pollard oak, which concealed and facilitated the passage over the wall to the garden, and (first dashing away the tell-tale light) had literally hauled up, after her, both her

companions, each of whom had, for a wonder, as she observed, been gifted with sufficient sense to submit to her guidance.

“Ill befa’ that weary lanthron!” quoth Janet, “I tell’t the gentleman, gin he wad stay quiet i’ the cave, I’d nae fear o’ getting safe to the foot o’ the rock. Wi’ my plaidie rowed round me, and nane to look on, I should hae slid down the path, ye ken, like a snaw wreath at Yule. But he wadna be guidit. I’m minded that he’s ane that has ta’en his ain gate owre lang. Weel, but ye maun hae a light!” And off she ran, finding her way through the darkness with the security and ease which seems one of the many privileges of the light-hearted and the fearless.

During her absence, a fresh perplexity occurred to her mistress. Horses were heard galloping into the court, and a violent knocking at the gate was succeeded by a parley between Captain Archibald, and the visitors. The voice of one of

them was, she thought, familiar to her; and, to her unspeakable consternation, she found that he was advancing with Janet towards the apartment; Janet talking at the top of her voice, to give notice of his approach to her lady.

“Oot the nicht, General! Na, indeed, hae we not, except indeed to ca’ Luath, poor hound, who’s aye ganging forth in the rain. Sae my leddy and I we got a wee wet, and the wind put out the taper, and sae”—

Whilst Janet thus “followed her instinct as a lady’s maid, and lied,” her companion, General Campbell, closely followed by Archibald, stepped forward into the room, where Marion sate trembling with anxiety and apprehension.

“I intrude upon you only for an instant, my fair cousin, late as is the hour and indisposed as I regret to see you are, merely to announce to you that I shall, to-morrow, early, be obliged to steal away your

visitor, whose presence is required in Edinburgh, to meet his brother, and Lord and Lady Bellasis, and their pretty daughter Lady Betty. Give my compliments to Locheden, and tell him we have accounts of the rebel chief, Dungallan, one of the ringleaders, having ventured into Argyle's country. Tell him that we have taken care of the land passes, and that we shall borrow the castle boat in the morning, to despatch a messenger across the loch. And now, good night. Go to bed, my dear, and refresh your roses. I don't like those pale cheeks." And, with a kind pressure of the hand, the good General quitted the apartment. Archibald lingered behind.

"You hear that Dungallan, that this favoured *friend*, I presume you call him, has been traced into this neighbourhood, that he is even supposed to be upon this estate. Why do I speak of reports and suppositions when I know that he is here?" added Captain Campbell, impressively.

“You are mistaken! Indeed you are mistaken!” rejoined his cousin.

“Mistaken!—when I saw him enter the garden this very night!—when I can track his footsteps across this room!—when here is his glove dropped upon the floor! dropped at the very door which leads to your bedchamber, and to your bedchamber only!” cried he bitterly, flinging from him with violence the glove which he had picked up. “The rebel is here, and I know not what weakness hinders me from doing my duty as an officer in the King’s service, and delivering him up at once to the General.”

“Do as seems best to you, Captain Campbell,” said Marion faintly. “My life, and far more than my life, my reputation, are in your power. Deal with me as you will.”

“Nay, madam, your safety, and the honour of my kinsman’s house, must ever

be sacred in my eyes. Unkindly, cruelly as you have treated me, I cannot forget what we once were to each other. I warn you, however, that escape is impossible. You will live to repent this night's work. Farewell for ever!" And, without even a parting glance, he hurried out of the room.

"Ye are mair like to repent this nicht's wark yersel, captain," observed Janet, quietly, as she bolted the door after him, and addressed herself to the double task of comforting her lady and releasing the prisoner. "Gin the land-passes be waylaid, we maun try the loch. I'll gie a gay guess that the castle boatie 'll be missin' the morn."

And so it was managed. In less than two hours, the stranger, accompanied by Luath, was rowing across the loch; whilst, at daybreak the next morning, General Campbell and Archibald took their departure for Edinburgh.

Time dragged heavily on. Luath had returned, weary and travel-stained, without either his absence or his arrival having excited any suspicion in the castle. Nothing had been heard of the letter; and Marion had the satisfaction of believing that the sacrifice of her happiness had not been made in vain, that she had at least succeeded in rescuing the object of her compassion.

Locheden had, upon his return, found his daughter sick and drooping; and, as days lengthened into weeks, and weeks into months, and left the prolonged absence of her lover unexplained, the old chief began to chafe with anger and impatience.

He had heartily approved of a match which would unite his only child to the heir-male to whom, in default of a son, his own estate would descend, and who, besides his personal good gifts, and his high reputation for gallantry and military skill, inherited, in right of his English mother,

a property which might be reckoned enormous for a Highlander in those days ; but this neglect of one whom he regarded as the very apple of his eye, awakened all the irritability of his nature, and his fierce displeasure added tenfold, as that particular way of proving affection commonly does add, to the distress of her by whose injuries, real or supposed, his wrath had been originally excited.

Affairs were in this position, when, one fine morning in October, despatches arrived from General Campbell, calculated to increase, if that were possible, the previous exasperation. After announcing his intention to visit Locheden, almost as soon as his letter could reach them, accompanied by their young kinsmen, (Captain Archibald's next brother, John, being an officer in his own regiment,) he proceeded to say:—

“You will have heard, I am sure, with

great pleasure (for I take for granted that the bridegroom elect has apprised you of his good fortune,) of our gallant cousin's intended marriage with Lady Betty Bellasis, the English heiress and beauty, who has made so great a sensation in Edinburgh this summer. There have been difficulties, of course, upon the score of fortune and country with the Earl and Countess, but love has conquered them all; and the chief object of our journey to Locheden is to consult you, the kinsman, guardian, and friend, to whom both these young men are so deeply indebted, upon the arrangements as to residence and settlements, which this happy event will render necessary. The bridegroom elect is, in every way, a lucky fellow. In addition to her fortune and her beauty, *la future* is as charming a creature as one shall see on a summer's day—a fit companion for your sweet Marion, my pet and favourite. Heaven send them happy together!"

“A Lowlander! an Englishwoman! an heiress!—fortune-hunter! rascal! scoundrel, that he is!” exclaimed the old chieftain, throwing from him the unlucky letter, and striding up and down the hall, in breathless wrath. “And the doited idiot of a General, to even her with my Marion—the Sassenach doll! Let them take care how they speak of my daughter! Old as I am, the blood of M’Callamore runs as red in my veins as in theirs. Only let them dare to lightly *her*”——And the very excess and fierceness of his anger took away the power of expression.

Marion listened tremblingly, delaying till calmer moments any attempts to soothe and expostulate.

“Coming, are they?” burst forth the enraged father. “Coming! — ay, by Heaven!” continued he, catching a glimpse of a party of horsemen approaching the castle—“here they come. And they think

to find entrance, do they?" added he bitterly. "They come to take account of our accommodations, that they may bring their braw young bride to insult over the old man and his daughter! Let them wait until I be dead. Not a foot shall that villain set in Locheden, until he walks over my corpse. Angus! Duncan! Where are the loons loitering? See that the gates be barred! Let none enter!"

"Stay, I implore you, I conjure you, my dearest father! For my peace and happiness, for the honour and dignity of your daughter and your house, refrain from this violence! Give entrance to them all. Receive them as usual. I ask you, in the name of maiden pride, of maiden modesty, to restrain all demonstrations of anger. Let him not imagine, let him not suspect——God knows how sincerely I wish him happy," cried Marion. "Give them admittance, I exhort you, I

entreat you ! Let them see no difference ! Surely you will not vex and grieve your poor child. Yield to me in this, I implore you, dearest father !” And she threw her arms round his neck, leaned her head on his shoulder, and wept.

He kissed her with the fondest affection. “ You are an angel, my darling, and shall have your own way in everything. Compare an English moppet with my noble Marion ! The scoundrel will be miserable—that’s my comfort. His father married a Lowlander for the sake of the siller, a peevish Southron dame, that worried the life fairly out of him—and so will this great leddie. We are weel rid o’ the loon. Dungallan, puir laddie, ’s worth twenty of him. He’s won safe to France, ye ken, to his sister ; and, gin we can save the estate from the clutches of thae Englishers,” said the old chieftain, losing *his* English as he lost his temper, and checking him-

self as he perceived the effect his hint produced upon his daughter. "Weel! weel! We'll no talk of that the now. You shall see how civil I'll be to the villain. I'll no condescend to be angry. I'll take a lesson out of his ain book, and be as fause and fair as himsel'. Here the rascal comes. You shall see how doucely I'll behave. Eh, now, that sic a perjured traitor should look so like an honest man!"

That Locheden fully intended his behaviour to be as false and fair as he believed his kinsman, there is no manner of doubt. But the inveterate truthfulness of three-score years was too much for his new resolution. He did not, it is true, bar his gates against his visitors, nor kick them out of doors, being entered. But he drew back haughtily from their proffered hands, with a look as fierce and wild as one of his own mountain eagles, and eyed Archibald, in particular, as if he had a mind to knock

him down. General Campbell, a kind and acute person, and a man of the world, saw, at a glance, that something was amiss, and, determining not to enter upon family matters until the aspect of affairs should be somewhat cleared, began, after an affectionate expression of regret at Marion's pale cheeks, to talk over the news of the day.

“You have heard the grand piece of intelligence, I presume, Locheden, that this foolish young man, the Pretender, who has occasioned us so much trouble in chasing him up and down the country, has given us the slip at last, and got clear off to France. The thing is really so. Besides the accounts in the public papers, which are sufficiently precise and particular, I have a letter myself from a French friend, the Comte de Clermont, who actually saw him land. Why, heyday! my pretty Marion,” quoth the good General, observ-

ing the involuntary clasping of her hands, and the sudden rush of blood that coloured her fair face to the brow, as she listened to his words with breathless interest—"what should there be in this news to make you brighten up on a sudden? You are no damsel of the White Rose, I hope? No Flora M'Donald exploits here? Eh, Locheden?" And he turned to relate to the chief all that was then known of the escape of Charles Edward; whilst Archibald, to whom her emotion was as a flash of light that showed him the whole thing at a glance, advanced to his fair cousin.

"*He*, then, and not Dungallan, was the stranger at the cave? Charles Edward, the Pretender, the Chevalier, the Prince?"

"Nay, give him what title you will. I am no damsel of the White Rose, as the General calls it; although I risked much—ay, and would risk much again—to preserve a fugitive in peril of his life, thrown,

under such extraordinary circumstances, upon my poor resources for protection and assistance."

"But why not intrust me with the secret? Why occasion so much unnecessary pain—certainly to me—may I not say to both of us?"

"To have trusted you, Captain Campbell, an officer in the service of the King of England, with such a secret as that, however the confidence might have relieved and comforted myself, would have been to endanger your professional reputation, your honour, perhaps even your life. No, I cannot think that I was wrong! The more especially," added she, in a lower voice, and with peculiar sweetness and gentleness of manner—"the more especially, as the transient pain must have been long forgotten in your late and present happiness. Heaven knows, I congratulate you most sincerely."

“Happiness!—congratulate!” echoed Captain Campbell, in unfeigned astonishment.

“Marion, my dow!” said her father, striding rapidly across the room—“I have done a great injustice. It’s no our friend here, but Johnny, his brother, that’s about to marry Lady Betty, who seems to be a fine spunky lassie, for all she has the ill luck to be an Englisher. Archie, my lad, I crave your pardon for thinking you could be such a villain!” And the old chief and the young soldier shook hands, with hearty affection and goodwill.

“There has been a small mistake on both sides, as it seems,” observed General Campbell, joining the little group; “but matters are clearing up now, to judge from the gentleman’s smiles and the lady’s blushes; and, if I be permitted to advise, the best way to prevent a recurrence of doubts and misgivings, would be to have

both the weddings on the same day. What say you, Mistress Janet?" For that faithful dependent, very anxious upon her lady's account, and it may be a little inquisitive upon her own, had contrived, on some pretence or other, to edge herself into the room. "What say you?"

"I gie my consent," responded Janet; 'barring jealousy and a' sic nonsense, for the time to come. The captain and the loun Donald baith ken that I forewarned them what yon nicht's wark would come to. But ye men folk are aye rash and headstrong—ye canna help yourselves—it's born wi' ye; and we women are saft and complying—that's our nature; sae, sin' ye hae repentit, we maun e'en forgie ye," quoth Janet, "an' tak ye for better for worse."

And so it was settled.

THE WAGER.

"Gone to be married! Gone to swear a peace!"

SHAKSPEARE.

"LILY on liquid roses floating!

So floats yon foam o'er pink champagne.

Fain would I join such pleasant boating,

And prove that ruby main,

And float away on wine!

"Those seas are dangerous (graybeards swear)

Whose sea-beach is the goblet's brim;

And true it is they drown old Care,

But what care we for him,

So we but float on wine!

“ And true it is they cross in pain,
Who sober cross the Stygian ferry ;
But only make our Styx—champagne,
And we shall cross right merry,
Floating away on wine.

“ Old Charon’s self shall make him mellow,
Then gaily row his boat from shore ;
While we, and every jovial fellow,
Hear unconcerned the oar
That dips itself in wine !”*

“ So you really wrote this, Giovanni ?”
said the young and pretty Beatrice Alberti,
as she sat on a terrace of her brother’s
villa, overlooking the Val d’ Arno. “ Sing
it to me. I want to hear it in your own
voice. Can Antonio play the air ?”

* I was originally indebted for this Anacreontic—
almost an impromptu—to a friend whom I am proud
to name, Mr. Kenyon ; and although it has since
been printed in a collection of his own poems, I
cannot find in my heart to play my readers false by
substituting an inferior song of my own.

And the little page ran rapidly over the notes, and then accompanied the conte's rich, mellow, baritone voice, in a melody as rich and flowing as the verses. Both the singing and the playing were full of right Italian taste ; and the fair Florentine, charmed with both the words and the air, was evidently not a little proud of her gay and gallant brother, whose talent as a poet she had never even suspected.

“ Well,” said Giovanni, when he had concluded, “ will this do, Beatrice ?” Will that Anacreontic win me the laurel wreath to-night at the Palazzo Riccardi, think you ?”

Beatrice started from her seat in astonishment.

“ You go to the Palazzo Riccardi ! You contend for the laurel crown ! You, Giovanni Alberti, who, since you were the height of Antonio there, have done nothing but laugh at that old *précieuse*, the

marchesa, with her pedants and her poets, and all the trumpery of all the Della Cruscans transported into a lady's saloon ! You are making a fool of me, brother ! You never can mean it !”

“ I am perfectly in earnest, I assure you,” replied the conte, looking, or rather trying to look, as grave as an habitually joyous and hilarious temperament would permit. “ I have repented of my sins of scoffing and mockery, and mean to make that venerable priestess of the Muses all possible amends by enacting the part of her Monsieur Trissotin, her *homme d'esprit*.”

“ With this great lawsuit pending, too ! A suit which, if you gain it, will leave that sweet-looking creature, her daughter (every one speaks so well of that pretty, gentle Bianca), little better than a beggar ! Why, it would be like the story of one of the Montecchi in the house of the Capu-

letti, in times of old. Think of that dismal tragedy! And, then, our uncle the cardinal, what would he say? Think of him!"

"There are no tragedies now-a-days, Beatrice—at least none of the Romeo and Giulietta description; they have left off happening: and as to our dearly beloved uncle, he is a man of peace, and also—with reverence be it spoken—a man of contrivance. Leave his Eminence to me. Go I shall; and I'll wager the antique gem that you were wishing for the other day—do you remember?—the Psyche—against your doves, that I bring home the prize. I see," continued he gaily, "that you think my verses are too good to please that fantastical assembly; and, perhaps, you are right. But, good or bad, they will answer my purpose; and you shall confess yourself that my wager is won." So saying, the light-hearted cavalier

nodded to his sister, and departed, carolling, as he went, the refrain of his own song, "Floating away on wine."

Five minutes saw him prancing on his mettled barb, a fiery roan, whose gay curvets and sudden bounds showed to great advantage his noble owner's horsemanship; for the young Conte Alberti was, by common reputation, as well as in the estimate of his fond sister, reckoned amongst the most accomplished cavaliers of Florence; and a very short space of time found him passing through the Lung 'Arno, on his way to his splendid home in the Piazza del Granduca, regarding with the indifference of an accustomed eye and a preoccupied mind, the spacious, yet tranquil town, whose size, compared with its population, and whose fortified palaces, are so striking to strangers; as well as the magnificent groups in bronze and marble, mere copies of which enrich the museums of other

nations, whilst the originals are the familiar and out-door treasures of the city of the Medici.

Little thought our friend Giovanni, passing them at full-speed on his full-blooded barb, of palace or of statue ; and as little, some few hours after, when pacing in the twilight the church of Santa Croce, did he heed, even while looking them in the face, the monuments of Galileo, of Machiavelli, or of him who wore so nobly the triple crown of Art—the sculptor, painter, architect, Michael Angelo Buonarotti. His thoughts were on other matters.

“Ay, there is the good father safe enough until he be wanted, I warrant him,” cried he, gazing complacently upon a round, rosy, good-humoured brother of the order of St. Francis, drowsily ensconced beside a dimly-lighted shrine. “Per Bacco! the Monte Pulciano hath done its good office. Look, if he have not fallen asleep over his

beads ! A comfortable nap to thee, Father Paolo ! Stay there till I come to rouse thee !” And off danced the mercurial conte, murmuring his old burden, “ Floating away, floating away, floating away on wine !”

A blue-stocking party loses nothing of its proverbial dulness in the marble halls of Italy ; and the assembly gathered together in the Marchesa’s magnificent saloon—that is to say, that very important part of such an assembly, the listeners, were roused from a state of drowsihood, scarcely inferior to that of Father Paolo, by the unexpected entrance of the young heir of the Alberti in the palace of the Riccardi.

It was a most animating sensation. The appearance of a Montagu amongst the festivities of the Capulets was nothing to it. The commerce of flattery (for the important business of the evening had not yet begun) suddenly ceased ; and the

foundress of these classical amusements, a *fade* and faded lady, emulous of her of the golden violet, who sat on a fauteuil, slightly elevated, with the laurel-wreath on its crimson velvet cushion, laid upon a small table of rich mosaic, before her, and two starched and withered dames of the noble houses of Mozzi and Gerini at her side, stopped short in the middle of a compliment, with which, as in duty bound, she was repaying the adulation of one of the competitors for the prize, and started between horror and astonishment, as if she had been confronted by an apparition.

Our modern Romeo, however, was not a man to be dumbfounded by the amazement of a great lady, or awe-stricken by her displeasure. He advanced with a mixture of gaiety and gallantry, an assured yet winning grace, which, for the moment at least, the stately marchesa found irresistible, and professing himself an humble

aspirant at the court of the Muses, come to do homage to their fair representative, took his station at the back of her chair, and listened with smiling attention to the competitors for the wreath.

It was, perhaps, the very worst period of Italian literature; before Alfieri had come in his might to renew the old strength and power of the sweetest of modern languages; and when the versifiers of the day, “the word-catchers, who *lived* on syllables,” confined themselves to mere verbal quiddities, and the most feeble and trivial imitations of the worst parts—the only parts that such mimics can hope to catch—of the great poets of a preceding age.

Signor Ricci, a lean, yellow, shrivelled anatomy, began the recitations with squeaking forth a canzone to Angiolina, all bristling with *concetti*, after the manner, as he was pleased to say, of Petrarch; and was

followed by a wild, sallow, pseudo-enthusiast, who declaimed, with astounding vociferation and gesticulation, an unfinished and seemingly interminable dream, in the involved and difficult triple rhyme which, beauty and sublimity apart, was, in the matter of obscurity, pretty truly what it professed to be—a Fragment in imitation of Dante.

For “flickering lights, to no one focus brought,
And mirage mists still baffling thirsty thought,
And night-mare phantasies from drowsy grot,
And far similitudes that liken not.”

Rhymed Plea for Tolerance.

Signor Puzzi beat Signor Ricci all to nothing. And accordingly he gratified to the highest point the bad taste of this coterie of Italian *précieuses*; and in the midst of tappings of fans and murmurs of admiration of this grand effort of their chosen bard, the Monsieur Trissotin of Florence, our friend Giovanni gently stole

off to a quiet corner, near the door, where sat a sweet-looking little maiden, whose black eyes sparkled with innocent pleasure, and whose rosy lips curled into irrepressible smiles at his approach. She made room for him beside her, with a natural simplicity and artlessness that formed a strange contrast with the affectation and *minauderie* of the rest of the assembly.

“So, you are a poet, Conte Alberti?” said she, in a low voice.

“To be sure I am,” replied he, gaily; “anything that will bring me to you.”

“Really a poet?” asked the lady.

“Why, that is putting my modesty to a very severe test,” said the gentleman.

“Really a poet? Who may dare answer that question in the affirmative? Judge for yourself. Come out into the porch,

and Antonio shall bring his guitar, and I’ll sing the words to his accompaniment. You have heard such a serenade before. Don’t you remember our old signal?—

'The moon is abroad in her glory to-night,
Mid the deep blue sky and the cloudlets white;
Gaily her beams pierce the vine's trellised shade;
Softly they sleep on the long colonnade;
Calm her path in the heavens, though the bright
orb below
Still trembles and heaves to the dark river's flow.

All lovely things are around us to-night;
The rose with her perfume, the moon with her light;

and so forth. This song is worth a thousand of that. To be sure," added he, laughing, "that is not saying much for it. But these stanzas are really good. Only come, and hear."

"You'll win the prize then?"

"I have laid a wager with Beatrice that I carry the prize home to her, in spite of them all; and it will be your fault if I lose. Only come out into the porch; I can't sing here. Besides, I have something important to say to you. I want you to help me to get rid of our weary lawsuit. Would

not you like to put an end to this unnatural strife, and live with Beatrice as a sister and friend?"

"Ay, from the bottom of my heart, would I, Conte Alberti!" said Bianca, clasping her hands fervently. "From the very bottom of my heart! And with you, too," added she, with great simplicity.

"Come with me now then, and I will shew you how it may be managed. I beseech you, come."

"Oh, Giovanni, I cannot; I must not! We shall be missed. See, Signor Puzzi has finished, and they are going to call for your poem."

"Heavenforfend!" cried Giovanni. "No! the danger's past. Young Caroli is going to declaim a drama *à l'improvvisa*. What subject do they give him? The Judgment of Solomon, by Jove! The Judgment of Solomon!!! Now, will he

turn the marchesa into the Queen of Sheba, and go flattering on for two good hours, at the very least. They are safe enough now. Come, fairest Bianca! Dearest Bianca, come!"

"Well, Beatrice," said Giovanni, as he led his pretty wife to his delighted sister, "is not my wager fairly won? The cardinal suggested this catastrophe to our story; not indeed the means.—Cospetto! they would never have entered his Eminence's brains; but he said, a year or two ago—that is to say, he intimated—that if the heir male on one side married the heiress on the other, he, the aforesaid heir male, would have nobody to go to law with but himself. I had not then seen my little Bianca, and therefore I turned a deaf ear to his hints. But after I had seen her, and loved her, the charmer!—why then

if it had been necessary, to gain admittance, that I should have constructed as vile a canzone as Signor Ricci,—and have dreamed as detestable a dream as Signor Puzzi,—and dramatised the Judgment of Solomon into the bargain, I'd have done it. We have sent a dutiful billet to the marchesa, and I have no doubt but, for joy at getting rid of the lawsuit, and out of compliment to my poetical genius, she will behave like a reasonable woman—the more especially as what is done cannot be undone, and all the anger in the world will not mend it. So now, my fairest Beatrice, you have nothing to do but to set her the good example of bearing misfortune with philosophy, and pay me my wager. 'The doves! signora, the doves!'

It is not, however, to be
understood, that I should have
any other view of the
subject, than as a
subject of the highest
importance to the
people of the East.

THE LOST PEARL.

"The gorgeous East, with richest hand,
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold."

MILTON.

It was somewhere in the last quarter of the last century, that Charles Pemberton, the younger son of an ancient but impoverished family, having committed the old-fashioned folly of marrying a young lady, for no better qualifications than beauty, sense, and goodness, without regard to those worldly considerations which modern prudence deems indispensable, esteemed himself most fortunate to inherit, through the bequest of a distant relative,

a small estate in the Island of Ceylon; and to obtain a commission in a Dutch regiment serving in that colony, in which, in the course of fourteen or fifteen years, he attained the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

Living chiefly upon his own property, about a mile from the beautiful village of Negumbo, amongst some of the finest scenery of Ceylon (which the inhabitants imagine to have been the abode of our first parents, the paradise of the old world); enjoying an elegant competence, and, all-sufficient to each other, Colonel and Mrs. Pemberton would have considered themselves blessed beyond the ordinary lot of humanity, in spite of their banishment from the country they loved so dearly, and the society they were so well calculated to adorn, but for the great evil of eastern climates, the successive deaths of several promising children. Five fine boys and girls had they followed to the grave; and

the only one who now remained to them was their little son William, a child remarkable for his affectionate temper, his intelligence, and his beauty ; upon whom both parents doted, more particularly, perhaps, his mother, whose own health had been considerably injured by the repeated trials which her maternal feelings had undergone.

No tutor had been provided for Willy, whom they intended hereafter to send to England for his education. Meanwhile his father acted as his instructor, when at home in the intervals of duty, whilst Mrs. Pemberton supplied his place in his absence ; but the active, lively boy was much about in the cinnamon plantation (just then beginning to be cultivated by the few British residents on the island), which were superintended by a Cingalese, called Vinna, a man of remarkable quickness and much apparent fidelity ; whilst on longer

excursions he was put in charge of a superior domestic servant, a Malay of the name of Gatura, who, by his pliancy of manner, and powers of amusement, had greatly ingratiated himself with his young master.

So implicit was the colonel's confidence in these dependents, especially in Vinna—for there was an occasional expression in the dark eye of the Malay, which recalled to recollection the vindictiveness of his race; but such was his reliance upon Vinna's integrity and care, that it came upon him like no common shock, to find, having contracted for the sale of some essential oil of cinnamon (extracted from such fragments as happen to be broken off in packing up the bales), and having seen it actually measured and ready for delivery, that half-a-dozen bottles of this valuable oil, which sometimes sells as high as ten pounds British a pint, were missing; and that, upon

subjecting all concerned to an examination, two of the very peculiar bottles, in which the oil had been contained, were found in a corner of Vinna's hut, behind the earthen vessels used for cooking rice; whilst another was hidden between the brass basin and the pestle and mortar, where the spices are pounded, upon the bench which surrounded the apartment, and formed, with the articles which we have enumerated, nearly the whole of its simple furniture. The bottles were not merely distinguishable by their fabric and shape; but the strong aroma of the precious commodity, and even a few drops left in the bottom, proved that they had been secretly and hastily emptied of their contents; and that Vinna, the trusted superintendent of this valuable manufactory, was himself the thief.

After one simple but earnest denial of the charge—a denial to which his master

made no other reply than pointing to the concealed bottles—the delinquent attempted no farther defence, but resigned himself tranquilly to whatever punishment the laws might decree. That extremity was, however, averted by the intercession of Willy, whose urgent entreaty for pardon for his friend was so far complied with, that Colonel Pemberton contented himself with dismissing the favourite servant, who had set so flagrant an example of dishonesty to the labourers under his charge.

“Remember,” said his master impressively, when paying the wages due to him and discharging him from his service, “Remember, that I have abstained from punishing you at the earnest solicitations of this child; but that if ever you again come before me for any act of theft or fraud, the chastisement will be exemplary.” Vinna listened in silent submission, kissed the skirt of Willy’s garment, and departed.

For a while the boy missed his kind and pleasant face in the cinnamon plantations and about the home-grounds ; but the griefs of childhood are enviably brief, and he had nearly forgotten his old playfellow, when he was thrown unexpectedly in his way, many months afterwards, in a visit paid by himself and his father, attended by Gatura, to the pearl-fishery at Condatchy.

A gay and pleasant scene was this pearl-fishery. Thousands of persons, of all colours and nations, in the picturesque costumes of the East, from the rich travelling merchant who supply the great jewellers of our European cities, to the poorest of the Cingalese women and children, who hover around the sieves, and pore for days over the heaps of sand which have been thrown aside, in the hopes of lighting upon the smallest seedling pearl, crowd the streets of the temporary town (at other times a mere fishing village), washing, sifting,

boring, drilling, squabbling, and bargaining, in every variety of dialect and jargon; all intent upon the beautiful luxury destined to add a costlier splendour to the monarch's crown, or a rarer charm to the brow of beauty.

Willy was delighted; all the more delighted that he met his old friend Vinna, and that Vinna had been singularly prosperous. A speculating merchant had not only engaged divers on his own account, but had employed persons to examine the sand that had been thrown by, after passing, or being supposed to pass, through the sieves. Vinna had been fortunate enough to discover, in a portion which must have been spilled before being subjected to that process, a pear-shaped pearl of such size and beauty, as had not been found off the coast of Ceylon within the memory of the oldest trader connected with the fishery. An agent of the King

of Candy, specially despatched by his royal master for the purpose of obtaining such a jewel, to gratify a fancy expressed by his favourite wife, who wanted such an one to complete a set of ornaments, was at that moment treating for it with his employer. Vinna ran to procure it to show to the boy, and placed it on a crimson shawl to display the shape and colour to the best advantage. At Willy's entreaty, Colonel Pemberton also advanced to admire the treasure, attended by Gatura, who had accompanied them to Condatchy ; and a little crowd of merchants and natives gathered round the place, enlarging upon its merits, marvelling at Vinna's good fortune, or rather the extraordinary luck of his employer, and wondering how, by any degree of carelessness, a pearl of such magnitude could have escaped from the sieves.

Whilst these assistants, in the heat of

their discussion, stood divided into separate groups, and Colonel Pemberton, at Willy's entreaty, was speaking with a grave and measured kindness to Vinna, his employer and the agent of the King of Candy having concluded their bargain, returned for the pearl. They applied to Vinna, who motioned to the shawl which he had deposited on the top of a high covered basket close behind him. The basket was there, and the shawl; but the pearl was gone! The consternation was general. Vinna wrung his hands in agony; the buyer and seller of the precious commodity were in equal dismay. Every man looked suspiciously on his fellow. Some disclaimed; some accused. Gatura, who had stood nearest the basket upon which the valuable jewel had been so unhappily left, insisted so vehemently upon being searched, that, rather to pacify him and rid themselves of his clamour, than

from any positive mistrust, his dress and person were, as he desired, subjected to a very rigorous examination; nothing, of course, being found that could implicate him any way in the delinquency.

In the meantime, the less successful adventurers, who had before been loud in the expression of their astonishment that such a pearl could be found in such a manner, began to gather round Colonel Pemberton, to examine into the character which Vinna, whom they understood, from what had passed between them, to have been heretofore employed by him, had borne while in his service. The agent of the King of Candy, the purchaser of the pearl, and the speculator who had sold it, also approached with the same view. Willy, who, child as he was, saw the turn that matters were about to take, seized the opportunity to steal towards his friend.

“Go, Vinna! go!” said Willy; and,

with a sudden start, and a momentary pause, Vinna obeyed the injunction. He disappeared among the crowd; and, by the time that the questions of those interested had extracted from Colonel Pemberton the cause of his dismissal, and that two or three of the most determined called out to arrest him, he had made such good use of his time, as completely to baffle every effort of his pursuers: his flight, whilst it saved him from almost inevitable punishment, producing upon everybody, except Willy, who did battle manfully in his behalf, the most complete conviction of his guilt. It seemed as certain that he had stolen the pearl,—perhaps, that he had twice stolen it,—as that he had stolen the oil of cinnamon. No one believed in the possibility of his innocence, except our friend Willy.

The father and son returned to Negumbo; and, in a little while, the colonel was

called away on service; and, Mrs. Pemberton being in delicate health, Willy was left much to the care of Gatura, who spared no pains in his endeavour to win the favour of the lively and spirited boy. He constructed a pad, on which to take him before him on a blood horse, belonging to the colonel, and carried him every day upon some excursion to the cocoa groves (or topes), or the dreary forests which surrounded their habitation. One day, he took him to see the manner in which wild elephants are caught; and Willy was delighted with the sagacity and affection displayed by one of the tame ones, who, apparently recognising an old companion in the largest of those that had been ensnared, actually opened the fastenings of the gate for the release of his friend; thus shewing, although enslaved himself, his sense of the value of freedom. Willy was enchanted; and, on Gatura's dwelling

upon the grāndeur and interest of a buffalo hunt, never ceased importuning the Malay to afford him that gratification.

One fine morning, accordingly, they set forth professedly to witness this remarkable spectacle. The high-bred steed carried them rapidly through the cocoa tope, into the very depth of the forest. No sign appeared of the hunters ; but, pleased with the beauty of the scenery, the golden rays of the sun darting through the shaddock and the tamarind, and resting on the beautiful fruit of the jamboe, and amused by the variety of bright coloured birds and gorgeous butterflies, the boy took no note of the distance. At last, as the day advanced, the claims began to be felt, and he intimated to Gatura his desire to return home.

“Home !” said the Malay, in the low accent of bitter hate ; “you never shall return. Do you remember the day—you,

child as you are, may forget ; but on my memory that day is burnt in characters of fire—when, for striking this horse, ay, it was this very horse, as Colonel Pemberton, my master, your father, was pleased to think over hard, he snatched the whip from my hand, and struck me, ay, lashed me with it, as if I had been a beast ? I grasped the crease in my bosom ; but that would have been a brief and common vengeance. I have waited for such revenge as may endure ; and now my hour is come. You, too, young sir ! you were pleased to read out of some story-book to your mother that pearls might be hidden in the mouth ; that stripping the dress, and searching the person, was no security against a skilful thief ! Home shall you never come to tell your father that tale, unless, indeed, you can win your way through the beasts and reptiles, the snakes, and the panthers of this forest.

Down with you, sir ! Do not cling around me in this manner ! Let go my sash, or I will cut away those little hands ! What noise is that ? Off with you, I say !”

And, frightened at some real or imaginary noise, Gatura dashed the struggling child to the earth, and rode rapidly away, leaving in the boy's hands the shawl sash, by which he had clung so tightly, and which had been folded, after the oriental fashion, round the waist of the Malay. A small packet dropped from it—it was the lost pearl !

Hungry and bewildered as he was, the stout hearted boy lost neither his courage nor his presence of mind. He pocketed the precious jewel, plucked the unripe fruits to appease the cravings of appetite, and tried, with all his might, to retrace the way by which he had come, and to turn back to his home ; but, far beyond his own knowledge, he only plunged deeper

and deeper in the forest. He avoided, however, with remarkable boldness and sagacity, the frequent dangers from snakes and wild animals, took refuge under a talipot-tree from a storm, which sent the shrieking flor-mouse to the same friendly shelter; and at night, remembering that the Cingalese sometimes constructed their habitations for security on the branches of trees, he climbed the tallest trunks that he could meet with to sleep.

What was the agony of the bereaved mother during that long and solitary night! Gatura had not returned, and, wholly unsuspecting of his treachery, she imagined that some fatal accident had happened to him and to his charge. Messenger after messenger did she despatch in every direction; Colonel Pemberton was recalled; and every means taken that the most anxious affection could dictate, to recover the missing child.

He, meanwhile, wandered on, subsisting on wild fruits by day, and sleeping in trees by night, until he had nearly reached the boundaries of Candy. He too, poor child, was heart-sick and home-sick. The high courage which he inherited from his father, animated him at the approach of danger; but at other moments, footsore, weary, bruised by falls, and torn by bushes, his spirits flagged, and his strength was exhausted. One day, as he was passing by some brushwood, which half concealed the entrance to a low cavern, a furious buffalo came bellowing up a track in the forest, and, pausing for an instant, lowered his head to attack the child. Another moment, and Willy would have been gored by his horns, or tossed into the air; but a man rushed from the cavern, and, seizing the child with one arm, with the other flung a piece of cloth (part of his own garments) over the head of the buffalo, blind-

ing him, and entangling his horns, so that the boy and his preserver had time to retreat into the cave, the entrance to which was too low to admit the enraged animal. Willy was saved ; and turning to thank the friend to whose boldness and address he owed his life, he burst into tears of delight, clapped his little hands together, and shouted " Vinna ! dear Vinna ! "

Three days after this, Vinna, bending in respectful salutation, with his arms folded upon his bosom, stood in the presence of the beautiful wife of the Candian king. She listened to his little story, and listened pityingly, for she was a woman and a mother. She promised, with the grace of conscious power, and nobly did she redeem her promise, to redress all Vinna's grievances, whether as regarded the oil of cinnamon, which she justly suspected Gatura to have stolen, or the lost pearl ; and with

regard to that pearl of pearls, the noble boy Willy, she made it her first business, her first pleasure, to send him home to his distracted parents, laden with presents, and accompanied by his brave preserver, the faithful Cingalese.

WEDDING SLIPPERS.

"This love will undo us all."—SHAKESPEARE.

ONE of the shortest and dreariest days in January was drawing to a close. Snow had fallen some days previously, and glared upon the roofs of the houses in the picturesque and irregular old town of Belford Regis, and lay mixed with ice, and trodden into a sort of wintry dust upon the highway. Snow, too, was visibly hanging in the grey and gloomy sky, waiting

only for milder weather—for the hour when the soft south-west should steal upon the black north-east—to come down in a world of white feathery flakes, and cover the earth with its bright, level, uniform beauty.

The streets, although not yet lighted, were almost deserted of carriages and passengers—except, indeed, the well-wrapt little boys and girls, tripping rapidly home from school, with cheeks almost as red as their red comforters; and the noisier and merrier troop of happy, ill-clad urchins, who came frisking and shouting from the pond at the top of the hill, the great pond opposite the Queen's head, where they had been keeping the cold at bay, by sliding and tumbling upon the ice, and pelting each other with snowballs, making, as it were, a playmate of the frost; and, excepting also careful servant-maids, wending, with cautious speed, over

the slippery pavement, laden with smoking dishes from the bake-houses ; or hurrying pot-boys, or slower milkmen, rattling their jingling commodities against the icy steps of the doors, or the iron railing of the areas.

In a word, it was at the close of a winter's day, that, the morning influx of customers having intermitted, the shopmen and apprentices of Mr. Morris, the greatest haberdasher of Belford, had retired to warm their fingers in their own apartment—preferring the bright fire of the open grate to the smoky heat of the stove—after returning to their shelves, nicely folded up, the numerous articles taken down to gratify the fastidiousness or the caprice of lady-purchasers, for men, to do them justice, seldom do give this sort of trouble ; leaving in the dusky range of show-rooms, rendered tenfold more gloomy by the waving draperies which darkened

the windows, and swayed to and fro in the dim twilight, only two individuals—a respectable-looking elderly man, who, mounted upon a high stool, was seated at a very business-looking railed-in desk, employed in writing, by the light of a single taper, in an equally business-like, tall, thick book, bound in calfskin; and a young man, particularly well-looking and gentlemanly, whose likeness to the former sufficiently marked their relationship, and who stood at his side, pretending to be occupied in arranging a drawer of rich satin ribbons, which he was rolling and unrolling, and doing unconsciously his very best to spoil, in the eagerness of his appeal to his father's feelings.

“Yes, sir, it is but too true—and a thousand times she has urged the fact upon me—that poor Elizabeth is only a servant maid in the family of our good rector, Mr. Sumner. A servant she cer-

tainly is, but a most honoured and trusted one. Mrs. Sumner was so struck by her intelligence and sweetness, above a dozen years ago, amongst the girls at the Green School, that she took her home to her own house partly to attend and partly to play with her elder children. She shared their advantages of education—not indeed the accomplishments which were unfitted for her station, but those better and rarer advantages which regard the cultivation of the mind, and the formation of the character; and Mr. Sumner's opinion of her has been sufficiently proved, by his having, since the death of his excellent wife, and the marriage of his eldest daughter, committed the direction of his house and of his two younger children unreservedly to her charge. A servant she is, but one accustomed to the management of a large family, to the keeping of the most exact and elaborate accounts, to the prudent and

careful expenditure of money—to everything, in short, that is most desirable in a tradesman's wife. I speak now merely in a worldly point of view, and say nothing of the beauty, the sweetness, the grace, and the modesty which makes her an object of admiration wherever she appears.”

“She has no money,” replied Mr. Morris, suspending for a moment his pen over the book in which he had been apparently most sedulously engaged in making various entries during his son's harrangue. “She has no money.”

“Then her taste and skill in female apparel. You know, sir, how often you have said that, if my poor sisters had lived, you would have added millinery and dress-making to your business, and converted some part of our large premises up stairs into show-rooms. How often I have heard you say, that one branch of trade helped

the other; and that our opposite neighbour, Mr. Welsh, would not be able to keep his shop open against us, if it were not for his wife's caps and bonnets. Now, Elizabeth's taste and Mr. Sumner's connexion"—

“She has no money, Edward,—she has no money.”

“Neither had she, sir, two years ago, when, in consequence of Master Arthur's rashly venturing upon ice too weak to bear his weight, I had the first happiness of being of use to her and her young charge. Mine is no love of yesterday; no concealed or clandestine attachment. We have met openly at the institution lectures; have walked together on summer evenings. Mr. Sumner, without any verbal recognition of our engagement, has yet often, after church on a Sunday, virtually sanctioned it, by smiling, and significant invitations to accompany Elizabeth and the children to his house; nay, even you your-

self, by your manner of speaking to her and of her, have led me to believe that you considered her as a daughter. You are too keen an observer, too kind and careful a father, not to have seen the state of my affections; and I had thought you too wise and too liberal, to set a little paltry money in competition with the happiness of a whole life, or to wish me to break my plighted troth to one whom I dearly love—to one who loves me—and marry I know not whom, for the sake of adding needless pelf to our already flourishing fortunes. I had thought your only son was dearer to you than money. But I was mistaken—you hold my honour and my happiness at no higher price than this gaud.” And he threw from him in bitterness of spirit the roll of ribbon which he had been so busily folding and unfolding.

The pen dropped from the father’s hand.

“You *are* mistaken, Edward,” said he,

in a low voice, which was interrupted for a moment by a sound well-known to the inhabitants of Belford—the deep hoarse cry of “Shoes! old shoes!—shoes! old shoes!” from beneath the window.

“You are mistaken, my dear son, not in my feelings, but in my circumstances. The fortunes of the poor half-starved wretch who is calling ‘shoes’ through the wintry snow, are more flourishing than mine. Without your aid I am a bankrupt.”

Another hoarse deep cry of “Shoes! old shoes!—shoes to buy! shoes to sell!—shoes! old shoes!” gave to the agitated father the pause which his feelings required. His son was too much absorbed in astonishment and horror for speech; he could only listen in silent agony to a story which seemed to him rather like a frightful dream than a stern and waking reality. Mr. Morris continued:—

“You were too young when your blessed

mother died, to remember her distinctly ; and her poor sisters, gentle and amiable as they were, inherited rather her delicacy of constitution than her vigour of mind. Far above me in birth, in education, and in cultivation, she was left destitute at the age of seventeen, by the improvidence and the sudden death of her father, a beneficed clergyman ; and I owed the blessing of her hand chiefly to her desire to procure for her twin brother a home and a protector. Before our marriage, she made me promise to treat William Arnot as my own younger brother, as my own eldest son ; to be to him as a friend, a guardian, a father ; and of this most solemn promise she requested the renewal upon her death-bed. Heaven and you, my son, pardon me if I have kept it but too faithfully ! Let me make short work of this wretched matter. I placed him as clerk in a banking house in the city, where, as you know, he rose to be

cashier. I and another friend of my family were his securities, and all seemed fair and prosperous. Three months ago, he came to me in an agony of guilt and despair. He had been speculating in the share-market. He had embezzled a large sum belonging to the firm, and, unless it were replaced by a certain day, his liberty, his character, his life—for never, he swore, would he survive the loss of reputation—were destroyed. Could I hesitate? Even had I abandoned him to his fate, I was equally ruined, since the house would have come upon me and upon the friend who, at my pressing instance, had joined me as his bondsman, to indemnify them for their loss. The sum was, to a man in my station, enormous, exceeding, by some thousands, the earnings and savings of the five-and-twenty years that I have passed in business. The deficiency was, however, raised for me, within the stipulated time, by our

friendly solicitor, Mr. Byrne, who happened to have, at the moment, a client, willing to lend the money upon my personal security, and this house, with the stock and furniture. I gave him a bill of sale on all my effects; and was considering whether or not to break the matter to you, or to go on upon credit, and leave the result to time, when Mr. Byrne made me, two days ago, a most unexpected overture, from the friends of a young person with a portion of £17,000, who, although informed of my difficulties, was yet willing to marry her to you, willing to pay off the debt, requiring nothing but a settlement of the rest of the money, and such an arrangement as to partnership, as I should have been, under any circumstances, but too happy to enter into. I have not seen her—I do not even know her name; but she is, they tell me, young, well-educated, and

amiable, a thoroughly good and exemplary girl."

"Oh, my father, do with me as you like! But, yet, Elizabeth!—dear, dear Elizabeth!"

"You would rather, then, be poor and happy with her whom you love. So be it, my dear son. Go to your Elizabeth. See if she be willing to share your poverty; willing to wait until some prospect may arise, that should in some sort, authorize your union. The unhappy man whose imprudence has been our ruin, spoke of one whose defalcation had ruined him, and who might, who probably would hereafter make good the sums for which he was engaged. He has repeated this expectation in a letter which I received from him last week. But that hope is too vague to build upon. See Elizabeth. Disclose to her, unreservedly, the position of affairs—I feel that, with her,

the confidence will be sacred—and then act as you see good. Put me out of the question. I am still strong and healthy, and capable of earning my bread as a shopman.”

“O father! never! never!” interrupted Edward, with a sharp and sudden revulsion of feeling. “Even if I were so undutiful, so unnatural, she would not consent; I know she would not. Often and often has she said that she felt that our marriage would never take place; that it never ought to take place; that your son, the son of the most respectable tradesman in Belford, ought not to be united to a poor girl from a charity school. And, now that that union can only be accomplished by depriving you of your home, by sending you in your old age to serve as a hireling—oh, she would never hear of it—would never bear the thought!”

“Go to Elizabeth,” repeated Mr. Morris,

in a smothered voice, pressing his son's hands between his, with an energy that betokened the struggle of his feelings—"Go and consult with your Elizabeth." And, as the shopmen and apprentices came flocking in, and the lighted gas gave a glittering brilliancy to the rich and gaily decorated shop, radiant with shawls, and silks, and ribbons, of a hundred varied hues—and a group of customers, gay country ladies, who wished to choose an evening dress by candlelight, appeared at the door—he escaped into the street, with an instinctive desire for solitude, and, almost unconsciously, took the road to St. Michael's rectory.

The lamps in the streets and shops were now burning, and showed with a most striking effect of light and shadow, the fantastic outline of the picturesque old town—the tops of the houses covered with snow, the icicles hanging from the

eaves, and the windows already covered with icy frost-work. The pavement was again alive with passengers—men and women hurrying to the Post-office; flies and carriages gliding, with a sort of dull, rumbling sound, along the snowy road; a stage-coach emptying itself of its freezing passengers at the Red Lion; a man with periwinkles, and a woman with hot chesnuts, each so muffled, the man in a frieze cloak, and the woman in a dreadnaught coat, that it would have puzzled an Œdipus to decide betwixt the he and the she; one little girl lingering longingly in the wake of the periwinkles; two great boys burning their fingers in a bold attempt to filch the burning chesnuts; other children rushing aimlessly along, shouting and bellowing as if to scare the cold. Men were thumping their feet upon the ground, and buffetting their chest with their arms to restore the circulation; women were chattering, dogs

barking, beggars begging, fiddles scraping, bells ringing, knockers tat-tat-tat-ing—in short, all the noises of a wintry evening, in a country town, were in full activity.

From the High Bridge, where the broad, bright river, with its double line of wharfs and houses, crowded with people, its boats and its barges, forms so gay and pretty a moving picture, so full of bustle, and colour of light and of life—from the High Bridge, the Kennett now showed like a mirror, reflecting on its icy surface, with a peculiar broad and bluish shine, the arch of lamps surmounting the graceful airy bridge, and the twinkling lights that glanced, here and there, from boat, or barge, or wharf, or from some uncurtained window that overhung the river.

The snow lay in drifts upon either shore, marking the long perspective, and glanced upon the suburban cottages and the distant country, edging into the gentle uplands,

hardly deserving the name of hills, that closed the prospect, strongly relieved, at the present moment, by the dark and dusky sky. In spite of his distress and pre-occupied mind, poor Edward, who had, probably without knowing it, much of those two rare gifts, the poet's feeling and the painter's eye, could not help stopping a moment, on the centre of the bridge, to contemplate so fine an effect of *chiar'oscuro*, so striking and beautiful a picture, composed almost without colour, by the nice contrast of light and shade.

While he stood admiring the scene, he was overtaken by the old man whom he had heard, a short while previously, crying "Shoes ! shoes !" under the window of his father's shop; and whom he had passed just before, whilst engaged in chaffering for some of his commodities with an orange-woman, whose barrow was stationed at the end of the bridge.

The itinerant shoe-merchant was, as I have said, well-known to the inhabitants of Belford by the name of Old Isaac; and, from his name, his calling, his keenness at a bargain, as well as from his quick, black eye, aquiline nose, and a greater proportion of beard than is usually suffered in this good kingdom of England to adorn a Christian countenance, was commonly reputed to be a Jew. He was a spare old man, of the middle height, somewhat stooping, but with a picturesque and richly coloured head, surmounted by an old slouched hat. His patched and faded garments were well-nigh hidden by two enormous bags, in which he carried the old shoes which he bought, and the new ones, or *soi-disant* new—for he was a great man at a *rifacimento*, and had the art to “gar auld *shoon* look maist as guid’s the new”—which he sold.

“Buy a pair of warm slippers, master,

this cold night," quoth Isaac. "Wedding slippers, fine enough for a lord."

"Nothing, this evening," said Edward.

"Have 'em a bargain, master," persisted the man of shoes.

"I am not in want of any," rejoined Edward, moving on.

"Wedding shoes, then? — wedding boots? Must buy somewhat," continued the vender, pertinaciously keeping up with our friend's rapid steps, and thrusting before his eyes the articles which he named.

"I tell you that I want neither wedding slippers, nor wedding shoes, nor any of your commodities," answered Edward, with some humour, endeavouring to escape from his pursuer.

"Don't ye!" exclaimed Isaac, with a knowing twinkle of his keen black eye.

"Don't ye! Well, then, buy for the want that's to come. I've set my heart upon

having a bit of a deal with ye to-night, and shan't mind bating a penny or two, rather than balk my fancy. You shall have 'em under prime cost," continued Isaac, coaxingly; "you shall have 'em for next to nothing. Do ye have 'em! We must have a deal. You'll see that you'll be married sooner than you think for. Your time's coming. So you may as well buy the wedding slippers at once. What do you bid for 'em? Make an offer."

"Not a farthing, Jew. I am in haste. You need not untie the bag. You have nothing that I would take if you would give it me. Let me pass on. I am not going to be married. I want nothing of you."

"Don't be too sure of that, Master Edward Morris. You and I may come to a deal yet. Jew, quotha! No more a Jew than yourself. If your eyes were not turned another way, you might see me in

the aisle of St. Michael's Church every Sunday morning and afternoon, as regular as yourself. Jew ! 'Tis an extraordinary compliment you idle folk pay to that tramping race, that, whenever you meet a body who takes care of the main chance, and turns an honest penny, you call him a Jew. Well, Master Edward, you'll see that you'll come to me for your wedding slippers." And, so saying, Isaac shouldered his bag again, and left the path free.

At another moment, Edward would have smiled at the old man's acute observation of the direction of his glances in church, and at his persevering endeavour to attract a customer, founded upon that observation ; but his thoughts were too painfully divided between his father and his mistress—his duty and his love ; and, during his rapid walk to St. Michael's rectory, he could only resolve to be guided in all things by the judgment and the feeling of Elizabeth.

She received her lover with the gentle self-possession, the calm and serious sweetness, which characterised her manner, and which had been partly, perhaps, the cause, partly the result of the confidence placed in her by Mr. Sumner. His father had, to suit his purpose, forced himself to advert to her situation and her origin in his conversation with his son; but Edward felt proudly that there was no trace of the charity school or of the servants' hall in the lovely woman who stood before him, with a simple and unaffected propriety—in a higher rank it would have been termed dignity—that would have beseemed a palace. His distress was immediately visible to her, and her anxious inquiries served to introduce his story.

“We must part, Edward; as to that there can be neither doubt nor question,” said she, in a low, steady voice, whilst the tears trembled on the long fringes of her large black eyes, and the rich colour went

and came on the finely-turned cheeks and lips, which a sculptor would have been proud to model. "We must part. I have always known that it would be so—always felt, without suspecting or dreaming of this obstacle, that Mr. Morris would find an insuperable objection to receiving me into his family. I ought, perhaps, knowing that, to have forbidden your visits. But I was encouraged in my attachment by one whom I am bound to obey, and by whose orders I have acted in this business; and my own feelings led me but too readily into the error. Oh, if it were only for ourselves, this poverty would be nothing! Young, active, accustomed to exertion, it would be delightful to labour with you and for you—delightful to feel that there was no superiority on your side, except that of your respectable connexions, and your manly and vigorous character. But your father—your kind and excellent

father!—to tear him from his home, to send him in his old age to serve as an hireling—he, so long accustomed to respect and consideration!—to banish him from his friends, his neighbours, his native town! We must not think of it. The sacrifice must be made. And you will find your happiness, dear Edward—we shall find our happiness—in his restored comfort, and in the consciousness of having done our duty.”

Affectionate son as Edward was, and determined as he had professed himself to abide by the decision of his mistress, he could not refrain from combating this resolution. She listened to him with sweet and mournful attention, as if willing to hear all that he had to say; but her determination was unshaken. She had just asked—

“Since we must part, dearest Edward, were it not wiser to shorten this pain?”

when an odd-looking little note was delivered to her.

Elizabeth read the contents once, twice, thrice, and remained silent and perplexed, as if hardly comprehending the meaning.

“It is very strange!” exclaimed she, thinking aloud, and forgetting that she was not alone; “very strange! What can he want at this hour?”

“He!” exclaimed Edward, jealous (so strange a thing is a lover’s heart) of her whom he was upon the very point of resigning. “He!—what he? From whom comes that note?”

“From one who must be apprised of this event.”

“Not, surely, from Mr. Sumner? No; from him it cannot be. But from whom? Who can have the power so to absorb your attention at such a moment?”

Elizabeth paused an instant, and then said, gently—“Come with me, and you

shall know. Although we are doomed to part, to meet no more, you must always be amongst the most valued, the most cherished of my friends. I cannot afford to lose your good opinion. Come with me, and you shall know all."

She tied on her bonnet, wrapped herself in a large cloak, and they passed through the rectory garden into the churchyard. The fine old Gothic building, with its grey cloisters, its graceful porch, its towers, and its steeple, rose in sombre grandeur from the graveyard, covered with snow, by which it was surrounded, the summit almost lost in the frosty mists of the air; so that the imagination added to the actual height, gave a cathedral-like grandeur to the edifice. A few yews and cypresses were clustered in one corner, and a row of stately limes, their larger limbs partially covered with snow, which lay in long intersecting lines, defining the forms of the

branches, led to an iron gate, which opened into a narrow lane, leading to one of the poorest and least populous suburbs of the town. Along this lane Elizabeth passed, sedulously attended by Edward.

“I ought to have told you before,” said she, in a low voice—“only he whom it most concerns forbade the disclosure, and Mr. Sumner, I hardly know why, coincided in his desire—that, although a charity girl, I am not, as you have thought, an orphan. I have a father, a most fond and affectionate father, one whom I love dearly, and who dearly loves me. He is a poor but industrious man, following a mean occupation; not so poor but that he makes me frequent presents, and is most kind and generous to the widow in whose cottage he lives, and whom he mainly supports. Still, I have always felt that he was not fit to be your father, nor to be connected so closely with a man so intelligent, so well-educated, and so respectable in station as

Mr. Morris. I always felt that something would prevent our union. And so, alas! it has turned out."

By this time the clouds had so far cleared away as to admit glimpses of a keen and frosty moon, which shed a cold, pale, desolate light upon every object; dwelling with tenfold desolation on a small hovel, whose rugged thatch and windows stuffed with rags, as well as the broken-down state of the little gate, (ajar perforce, since, hanging by one hinge, it would neither shut nor open,) which led into the narrow front court, betokened the most sordid poverty.

Up this court Elizabeth passed; and, knocking, with, as it seemed, a forced resolution, at a low door, in little better condition than the gate which formed the outer barricade, was immediately admitted by an infirm old woman into a dark and dismal kitchen.

"I look for your father every minute,

Miss Betsy," quoth the tottering crone, "for 'tis past his time o' coming in; and, if ye'll wait till I strike a light, ye may walk into his room, and I'll kindle ye a bit o' fire; for you tender lasses, that live in grand houses, can't bear the cold like us poor folk that be used to nothing better."

And, so saying, she fumbled out an old tinder-box, and having, with some difficulty, cherished a spark into a flame—for her old and withered hand, and feeble breath, seemed numbed and chilled by the cold which she defied so manfully—she lighted a wretched candle, led the way into the next apartment—and endeavoured, with a little damp straw, and a few dirty chips, that had evidently been long trodden under foot in some carpenter's yard, to produce, in a small rusty grate, from which the brickwork was breaking away, something as nearly approaching to

a blaze as the state of the fireplace and the nature of the fuel would allow.

Edward, in the meanwhile, took a mournful survey of the sordid abode, contrasting so strongly with the appearance, the mind, and the manners of the lovely and graceful woman who stood beside him, the beloved of his heart. The hearth and its appointments—the bit of old iron that served as a poker, the broken dustpan that officiated as shovel, the pipkin upon two legs, and the lipless pint cup which did duty as kettle, pot, and saucepan—this niggard and beggarly hearth was but a type of the rugged and scanty plenishing of the comfortless chamber. A jointstool, a rickety table, and two tumble-down chairs, one of them garnished with a cushion, darned, patched, and mended, until mending was no longer possible, figured in the centre of the uneven, bricked floor; over the chimney, was a mug with-

out a handle, a teapot curtailed of its fair proportions by the loss of half a spout, a teacup and saucer of different patterns, and two or three plates and basins, all more or less cracked, and repaired, not very artistically, with putty and white paint. In one corner was the inmate's humble bed—a chaff mattress, with one or two rugs or horse-cloths, much the worse for wear; in another, the little pile of straw, and chips, and rotten sticks, from whence the fuel now smoking rather than burning in the chimney had been selected; and, in a third, a dingy heap of old shoes.

The old woman, satisfied with her labour, retired to her part of the dwelling. Elizabeth was the first to break the pause which succeeded her departure.

“This, Edward, is the abode of my father—of a father whom, in spite of all that surrounds us, I have good cause to love. Does not the sight of such misery serve to

reconcile you to the destiny that parts us? Such, at least, is the effect which it ought to have—which it has on me. I am not fit to belong to your family. Never should I have cherished such a thought. Strange that Mr. Sumner, knowing as he did the whole truth, should have encouraged our attachment! Strange, most strange, that, till now, the name and the existence of my father should have remained a secret! Well! my presumption is fitly punished, and you will turn with a freer heart to one more worthy to share your home and possess your affections.”

“Say not so, my own Elizabeth! Were it not for my paramount duty to my own most kind and excellent father, all that I see here would but supply a fresh motive for our union. All speaks of poverty and industry—nothing of crime. And, next to the joy of offering you a comfortable home, should I reckon that of rescuing one so

near and dear to you from penury and toil. Oh ! that I were now the free agent that I thought myself yesterday ! Not another night should your father spend beneath this roof. If my wretched uncle, Arnott, could but know the misery that his wild spirit of speculation has brought upon us all !”

“ If he could, Master Edward, I am minded that he'd rather cry old shoes than gamble in the share market,” quoth our friend Isaac, advancing into the room ; depositing, with considerable care, his two bags of shoes in their appropriate corner, and emptying, with equal readiness, divers rotten sticks, fir apples, and stumps of gorse, gathered during his day's travel—for apparently he had wended countryward—from the several pockets of his nondescript garments. “ If these Stock-Exchange gamblers could but tell the sore hearts they cause to their friends and kindred,

mayhap it might go nigh to reform 'em," pursued Isaac. "So here you be, Master Edward, come to make a deal, as I prophesied ; and ye ha' brought Bess wi' ye, to clinch the bargain. So much the better. Gie me a kiss, Bess. So thou be'st come to help Master Edward to choose his wedding slippers—eh, my girl?" And the old man nodded his head, with a knowing wink, and chuckled—"Come to choose the wedding slippers!"

"Alas, my dear father, you little know," —— began Elizabeth.

"Alack and alack, wench! No alacks for me. I do know all the story ; ay, and a great deal besides, that neither of you know, wise as ye think yourselves. Come, my good boy and girl, sit ye down here by the fire. Bess looks as white as the snow on the house-top ; and thou, Master Edward, art not much better. Sit down, and make yourselves comfortable.

I'll tell you all about it." And the old shoe-merchant drew his two chairs to either side of his little fire, seated himself upon a stool in the middle, flung on fresh fuel, breaking the sticks with his withered hands, and did the honours of his small apartment with much hospitality. "Well, Master Morris, for all I cry old shoes about the streets, and my Bess (heaven bless her sweet face!) was brought up at a charity school, it ain't altogether for want of a bit of money. Many a year have I been scraping and scraping, and hoarding and hoarding, to save her a portion; and I told her and Mr. Sumner not to let out that she had a father, just for the pleasure of the surprise like. So, in the meantime, comes this affair of Master Arnott. Ay, better cry old shoes than go gambling in shares. So I happened to have the money, waiting for a good security—nothing like turning an honest penny—just when Mas-

ter Byrne was wanting it for your father. So I lets him have it. Here's the paper, see—what-d'ye-call't?—the bill of sale. And I offered him my girl, with £15,000 to her portion; not letting out who she was. And here I've just got a letter from him to Master Byrne, saying as how 'twill break your heart to marry her; not thinking, mind, that she's she. And I s'pose as how you are come to say that you won't have her, 'cause o' your father—eh? So she's refused o' both hands—eh, Bess? Well! I love a good father, and I love a good son; he'll be sure to make a good husband. And, if Bess don't make thee a good wife, my lad, there's no faith in woman. So take her!—and take this bit o' paper; that's ten thousand pounds: and there's five thousand that I promised," continued he, going to one of his corner heaps, and taking a couple of dirty bank notes out of an old shoe, "and another that

I give, 'cause of these two refusals. A good father makes a good son, and a good son 'll make a good husband. And I've heard to-day, from a real Jew, who knows a good deal of what goes on on 'Change, that Master Arnott is likely to get his money back again. So now off wi' ye to Master Morris, and tell him the news. And, hark ye, my boy, don't forget to come back for the Wedding Slippers !'

I give 'em two of these. A good
father makes a good son, and a good son
makes a good husband. And I've found
to-day, from a real boy, who knows a good
deal of what goes on in the world, that
Master Arnold is likely to get his money
back again. So now off we go to Master
Hornet, and tell him the news. And, Mark,
you're a boy, don't forget to come back for
the 'Wedding Sings'!

THE BUCCANEER.

“It is a poison tempered by himself.”

SHAKSPEARE.

“NAY, I know that the Stormy Petrel
is as pretty a boat, and manned by as
stout a crew, as ever sailed among the
green islands of the Carib Sea, or coasted
the bays and headlands of the main; but
a man's heart is made of flesh, Senor
Captain, albeit it sail under the black
flag, and even your wild sea rovers may

not be able to resist the smooth tongue of this varlet. It is a soft spoken youth, I tell thee. Give him three inches of cold steel as soon as he boards thee, and fling him off into the waves. The deep sea tells no tales."

"As thou wilt!" returned the Buccaneer, with a slight curl of his thin lip, and a glance, from whose strange mixture of gaiety and scorn the haughty Spaniard involuntarily shrunk. "As thou wilt! I had destined his ghost to the honour of guarding my own private hoard, buried in the sand on an island that shall be nameless. But 'tis easy to carry off some captive for that purpose, for he must be slain on the spot, observe, to be ready for the performance of his duty."

And now, so far as looks might go, the Planter's scornful sneer,—for he understood rightly, that however glossed over by levity, the superstition was a real

feeling,—retorted the ill-dissembled contempt of the Pirate Captain.

“ Since thou mistrustest the tender mercy of my dare-devils, Black Juan of Cales with his stiletto, or the Bohemian giant Brandt, with his boar spear, shall put him out of pain or ever he sets foot on the deck of the Stormy Petrel. The stab shall come before the fear. But how are we to make prize of him, Senor Don Pedro? Thou wouldst not have me send a boat’s crew to carry him off bodily from thine own plantation! I see that the little boat is still at the cove by the creek:—Canst thou not deliver him thyself into our hands?”

“ Not for all the silver of Mexico! Donna Gonsalva already misdoubts that I love not her favourite page. She knows too —— No, good Gervase,” continued Don Pedro, checking himself; “ I must not be seen in this matter. I must des-

patch Antonio to the Petrel in the little boat, an hour or two before sunset, whilst I myself remain at San Isidro, and in full sight of my whole household. He will come alone. Contrive to return the boat to its moorings; and hark ye, thou hast flags of all nations—hoist the red cross of St. George at the mast-head as soon as the deed be done. He will come alone, and without token. *There is thy warrant,*” added the Spaniard, taking a heavy purse from his girdle, and tossing it to the pirate; “there is thy warrant. And now, the sooner we put land and sea between us, the safer for both.”

“Coward!” thought the bold sea rover, as each turned to pursue his separate way. “Insolent coward! the red cross of St. George, the ensign of England, to announce a deed like this! The craven is liberal, however,” muttered he to himself, poising the purse of doubloons, after a

moment's pause. "Fear is a special paymaster. Well, his job shall be done; my trusty mate, Miles Bertrand, shall manage it, whilst I row stealthily to my own little desert island, and add this gold to my secret hoard. Miles knows no Spanish, so that pleading and remonstrance will stead the poor wretch naught; and, in good sooth, that rugged mate of ours will have no more remorse in striking down the solitary boatman than I have in crushing this beetle. 'Tis a foul deed, after all; but yon craven Spaniard must answer it."

Thus mused the Captain of the Stormy Petrel, as he strode with hasty steps towards the shore. The half-expressed thoughts of his late companion, as he bent his way inland, were not a jot more flattering.

"Ruffian!"—so ran his soliloquy—"scoffing, mercenary ruffian, and artful as mercenary; for had I consented to ac-

company Antonio, who shall say how the visit might have ended? And yet," continued he, more calmly, "of such tools doth a wise man make the instruments that shape his fortunes. To be fairly rid of this young Antonio, now too, that, if I read her rightly, Gonsalva hath discovered all; and now that the speedy arrival of the Governor at Vera Cruz will take my fairest cousin from my ward, robbing me at one stroke of beauty and of wealth, of living and of love! Why, it is such a necessity that, if the Pirate had demanded a statue of pure gold to guard his island treasure, the robber must have had it. Well, I have only now to find Senor Antonio, despatch him on some feigned errand to the Petrel, and be careful to keep in view of the whole household until vespers be past. I marvel if the masts of the schooner be visible from the portico of San Isidro, or whether I must ascend the roof.

The red cross flag will glitter afar. I must make good speed to find Antonio." And quickening his pace, he hastened silently towards the plantation.

The spot where these two worthies had held discourse of life and death, deliberately plotting the murder of an unoffending and innocent fellow-creature, was one of the most beautiful on the beautiful shores of Spanish America. A clear and sparkling rivulet gushed from the foot of a tall rock, overhung by the luxuriant and splendid creepers of the tropics, a grove of feathery palms yielded their long foliage to the sway of the western gale, mingling their murmur with the pleasant sound of running waters, and adding by their delicious shade to the perpetual freshness and verdure of the grassy margin of the spring. Flowers of every hue hung from the grey crag and the lofty palm trees, or enamelled the turfs ground, whilst birds

and insects, gorgeous as flowers, flitted from blossom to blossom, or basked in the fervid beams of noon. How could evil thoughts and evil deeds spring into life in such a scene !

A few hours had passed away since the interview which I have attempted to describe, and now the evening sun shone upon herb, and flower, and flowering tree, illumining with a diamond-like radiance the clear waters of the fountain, and bathing in a flood of light the lovely creature who stood upon its brink. She was gazing upon a miniature which she held in her hand, gazing so intently, that she started to hear her own name, although the speaker in following her thither did but obey her mandate.

“Donna Gonsalva !” said the page.

“Antonio !” responded his fair mistress ;
“Antonio, are we alone ? Art thou sure that we are alone—that none can see or

hear us—above all, that my stern and haughty cousin, my servant, as he calls himself,—my master, for so I have long felt him to be,—is at safe distance? Dangerous were it, past all danger, if he should hear that which I have to tell. Where is Don Pedro, Antonio?”

“I left him writing even now at the house, dear lady. He hath sent me on an errand to the trader in the roadstead, to bring from the vessel certain rich stuffs, which he would, he said, have rowed ashore himself, had he not been engaged preparing letters for Madrid. He enjoined me to use despatch, and I should be already in a little boat, had not Inez conveyed to me your command to meet you here. You tremble, dearest lady; your colour comes and goes. Is there aught in which the poor Antonio can stead his sweet mistress? Hath any man dared to grieve you?”

“Nay, dear Antonio, this emotion springs from joy, not grief. I weep I know not why. Dost thou recognize this picture?”

“Full surely. It is the portrait of my honoured lord, your noble father.”

“And dost thou remember, children as we were, how he sent for us to stand beside his dying bed, and kissed and blessed us, and bade us love each other? Oh, thou dost, thou dost—I see thou dost! None knew thy parentage. Thou wast called an orphan—a poor orphan; and Don Pedro, when he took possession of this rich plantation of San Isidro, calling himself my guardian, and claiming me as his destined bride, would fain have sent thee to a monastery, to college, to the army—anywhere away from me; but our childish love was proof against threat or artifice. We would not be parted, and you remained at San Isidro as my page—mine own dear and loving page. Oh, An-

tonio ! our love was an instinct. Prepare for a strange happiness. Looking to-day at this portrait, given to me on his death-bed by my father, I touched a spring, the back flew open and discovered a letter. Prepare thyself for happiness incredible, for joy past all joy, my Antonio ! That letter—thou know'st that my mother died in the hour that I was born—that letter told of a secret marriage, during a brief sojourn immediately after her death in the country of his ancestors ; a marriage to one of humbler fortunes, the daughter of a soldier of old Spain. She, too, gave birth to a child, and shortly after died. Antonio, dear Antonio ! canst thou not guess the rest ? Thou art that child—my brother, dear Antonio ! the rightful heir of San Isidro. My brother—Oh, what joy is in the name ! Mine own dear brother ! Wilt thou not speak to me, Antonio ?

“Gonsalva, sweetest sister !”—and the

happy brother and sister were locked in each other's arms.

“We must be cautious for a short space, dear brother!” said Gonsalva, raising herself at length from Antonio's tearful embrace. “We must be cautious awhile, or our grasping kinsman, who, as our father's heir male, and as my guardian and destined husband, has hitherto enjoyed the revenues of this princely estate, would scruple no artifice to retain it. I tremble lest my emotion at the discovery may have awakened his suspicions. Our calmness must quiet them. We shall not long need to dissimulate. Our powerful kinsman, the Conde Almarida, is already on his way to Vera Cruz. We will put these letters into his hands the moment of his arrival. His authority, as governor, will be absolute. There will be no difficulty in proving the marriage. Father Ignatius, of the Dominicans of Seville, performed

the ceremony. I tell thee, Antonio, thou shalt be recognized as heir of San Isidro ! as mine own dear brother ! How proud I am of the name ! and now, away with thee ! We must not awaken suspicion,—’till to-morrow, farewell.”

“Farewell, then, sweetest sister ! Sweetest and most beloved ? What grief it is to leave thee even for one night ! Most beloved and most generous Gonsalva, fare-thee-well.”

“Generous !—say selfish, dear Antonio. Wilt thou not save me from a hated marriage ? Am I not rich in a thrice-dear brother ? Generous, indeed ! but this is no time for chiding. Thou must away ; hasten to perform thine errand ; delay no longer.” And they parted.

The fair Gonsalva, full of a generous and overflowing contentment, took the shortest path towards the plantation ; while Antonio, scarcely recovered from the bewilder-

ing joy and astonishment of her communications, obeyed half mechanically the wave of the hand by which she had indicated that his way led to the sea-shore.

The sudden and impressive sense of happiness, so perfect and so exquisite, seemed, like some enchanting dream, too bright to last. That he, the poor and homeless orphan, the child of charity, with no friend save his dear lady, should be the son of honourable parents; the brother of that sweet and gracious creature,—privileged to love and protect her,—to forestall her every wish,—to make for her such sacrifices as she had joyfully made for him,—to prove himself worthy of the blood of which he sprung—worthy to wield the knightly sword of his fathers!—such thoughts swelled his heart almost to bursting. He longed to pour out his whole soul in prayer and thanksgiving; and suddenly pausing as he wound among the rocks, he saw just above him a stone cross,

shining brightly in the last rays of the setting sun, and struck into an upward path which led to a small chapel on the top of the cliff, built and endowed by his father Don Roderigo Hernandez, partly in gratitude to the Virgin for an escape from shipwreck, and partly to serve as a beacon on that dangerous coast. Beneath was the shallow cavern in which Don Pedro's boat lay moored; and so close as to be within hail from the shore was the Stormy Petrel, the Pirate vessel.

Prostrate before the shrine of the Virgin Mother, absorbed in prayer and pious meditation, Antonio found the spirit-calm which he wanted. Time had passed by unnoted; and he was roused from his devotions by a rapid step below.

"No signal!" muttered Don Pedro, as he loosened the boat from its moorings. "No red-cross flag! He must have reached the schooner long ago. Hath the pirate

villain played me false ? Shall I hail him ? No ;—I'll row to the ship and learn the truth at once."

By the time Antonio had descended the steep and rugged pathway that led from the chapel to the shore, Don Pedro, putting his whole strength to the oars, had reached the vessel. Apparently he was expected there. The Stormy Petrel lay defined in strong relief against the bright but transient glow of a tropical sunset. Two figures stood at the gangway, and as the Spaniard mounted the ship's side, a boar spear and a stiletto entered his body. The horror-stricken page saw the steel gleam, and heard the heavy plunge as the corpse dropped into the reddening wave. The murderer had fallen by his own engine.

" This even handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips."

NOTE.—The leading incident of Schiller's beautiful ballad of Fridolin, a good deal altered, will be recognised in this story. Ah ! those great Poets who lived before us—they stole all our best ideas.

THE VILLAGE AMANUENSIS.

"Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid—
Some banished lover."—POPE.

TAP! went a modest, timid, shy-sounding knock against the old-fashioned oaken door of William Marshall's domicile, in the brief twilight of a September evening—the hour of all others in which a pretty young woman might, with the least risk of observation, pay a visit to a handsome bachelor—the best hour to shield her from

the attacks of village gossipry, or to cover her own confusion, should her errand be such as to challenge something like a jest on the part of her host.

Tap ! tap ! again went the slender forefinger ; but although the reiterated summons was a thought louder than the first nearly inaudible demand for admittance, it was equally unsuccessful in arousing the attention of the master of the dwelling.

For this abstraction there was a reason which the young and tender-hearted will admit to be valid : the poor youth was in love, and to enhance that calamity he had quarrelled with the mistress of his affections.

William Marshall, at the time of which I write, schoolmaster of Aberleigh, the only son of one of the poorest widows in the parish, was a person of great merit. Some quickness and much industry had given him a degree of information and re-

finement unusual in his station, and his excellent conduct and character had secured the friends whom his talents had attracted. In short, he was one of those instances—more frequent than the grumblers of the world are willing to admit—which prove that even in this life desert is pretty certain to meet its reward.

The ancient pedagogue of the village, a man of some learning, who availed himself of the large and airy schoolhouse to add boarders aspiring to the accomplishments of mathematics and the classics, to the sturdy country lads, whom, by the will of the founder, he was bound to instruct in reading and writing, declared that this his darling scholar caught up, untaught and unflogged, all that he painfully endeavoured to instil, by book and birch, into the fortunate pupils whose fathers were rich enough to pay for teaching and whipping; and he followed up this decla-

ration not only by installing him, at the early age of seventeen, into the post of his assistant, but by recommending him so warmly to the trustees as his successor, that at his death, which occurred about six years after, William Marshall, in spite of his youth, was unanimously elected to fill the place of his old master, and took possession of the pretty house upon School Green, with its two noble elms in front; as well as of the large garden, orchard, and meadow, which the brook, after crossing the green, and being in turn crossed by the road and the old ivied bridge, went cranking round so merrily, clear, bright, and rapid as ever rolled rivulet.

Now this, besides its pleasantness as a residence, formed a position which, considering the difference of the age and times, might be reckoned, for our modest scholar, full as good as the magnificent proffer of the green gown, cow's grass, and

four merks a-year, made by the good Abbot Boniface to Halbert Glendinning,* and by the said Halbert Glendinning, to the unspeakable astonishment and scandal of the assistants, unceremoniously rejected; since, in addition to the stipend paid regularly as quarter-day came round, and the prospect of as many boarders as the house would hold, was the probable contingency of the tax-gathering and rate-collecting, the timber-valuing and land-measuring, which usually fall to the share of the schoolmaster; together with the reversion of the office of parish-clerk, provided always, that for a "master of scholars,"† who taught Latin and Greek and took boarders, such office were not held *infra dig.*

William Marshall's humble wishes were

* *Vide* "The Monastery."

† "A scholar, sir! I was a master of scholars."—*Lingo*, in the "*Agreeable Surprise*."

gratified. He was a happy man ; for, in addition to the comfort of having a respectable home for the infirm mother to whom he had always been a most exemplary son, he had the gratification (so at least said the gossips of Aberleigh) of preparing a suitable abode for one of the best and prettiest of the village maidens.

Ever since the days of Pyramus and Thisbe, proximity has been known for the friend of love ; and such was probably the case in the present instance, since Lucy Wilmot, the object of William Marshall's passion, was his next neighbour, the brook of which we have made honourable mention being the sole barrier by which her father's meadows were divided from the garden and orchard of the school.

A more beautiful boundary was never seen than that clear babbling stream, which went wandering in and out, at "its own sweet will," with such infinite variety

of margin : now fringed with alders, now tufted with hawthorn and hazel, now rising into a steep bank crowned with a giant oak flinging its broad arms across the waters, the reflection of its rich indented foliage broken by the frequent dropping of a smooth acorn from its dimpled cup ; now sloping gently down into a verdant bay enamelled with flowers of all hues, the intensely blue forget-me-not half hidden under the light yellow clusters of the cross-leaved bedstraw, while the purple spikes of the willow-herb waved amidst the golden chalices of the loosestrife, and large patches of the feathery meadow-sweet, the heliotrope of the fields, spread its almond-like fragrance and its pale and feathery beauty to the very centre of the stream, overhanging the snowy blossoms of the water-lily as they rose from their deep green leaves, and mingling with that most remarkable of the many sedges

that border our English rivers, whose flowers, placed so regularly on either side of their tall stalks, resemble balls of ebony thickly set with ivory spikes. Certainly, of all possible methods of dividing or uniting persons and property, this bright and cheerful stream seemed the most propitious to social intercourse, as William and Lucy found by experience.

The green in front of the schoolhouse formed a commodious natural playground for the children, sufficiently near for safety, and yet wide enough for all their sports, the noble game of cricket included: so that those sharp little eyes which love so dearly to pry into the weaknesses of their elders, especially when those elders assume the double relation of ruler and perceptor, were, during the intervals of tuition, happily engaged elsewhere; and really nobody, except perhaps a lover, would believe how attentive William Marshall became to

the cow which was tethered in the orchard, how punctual in culling himself all the fruit and vegetables needed from the garden, how assiduous, above all, in watering his mother's little flower-pot sloping down to the stream ; whilst on her part it was at least equally remarkable how often Lucy Wilmot found cause to fill her pail at the brook, or to feed the ducks, geese, chickens, and turkeys, which she had dislodged from their old home, the farm-yard, to establish by the water side. Never was poultry so zealously looked after. It happened to be a dry summer ; and it stands upon record at the Brook Farm that Lucy volunteered to fetch all the water wanted for domestic use by the whole family. "To be sure," as her sisters would laughingly observe, "they had sometimes to wait for it, especially if it were towards dinner-time, or before breakfast, or after school broke up." And then Lucy would

blush, and declare that she would never go near the place again ; and then, by way of keeping her word, she would take up her little basket of barley, and run across the meadow to feed her chickens.

Halcyon days were these. What a charming spot for a rural flirtation was that mirror-like stream ! What tender words floated across it ! What smiles and blushes looked brightly down into the bright waters ! And of how many of the small gifts, the graceful homages in which love delights, was that clear brook the witness ! From the earliest violet to the latest rose, from the first blushing cherry to the Katherine pear, rich and ruddy as Lucy's own round healthful cheek, not an offering escaped the assiduity of the devoted lover. Halcyon days were these to our friend William, when an affliction befel him in the very scene of his happiness—a shadow fell across the sunshine of his love,

so hideous and gloomy as to darken his whole future prospects, to sadden and embitter his very life. Like many other swift and sudden poisons, nothing could be more innocent in appearance than this implement of mischief, which wore the quiet and unoffending form of an unopened letter.

Hovering one day by the side of the stream, waiting with a basket of filberts, "brown as the squirrel whose teeth crack them," as Fletcher has it—filberts firm, juicy, and fragrant, the first of season—waiting until the close of evening should bring his Lucy to tend her poultry under the great oak—he saw a letter on the grass, and springing from bank to bank on a spot a little higher up, where the brook was sufficiently narrow to admit of this sort of lover's leap, he stooped for the paper, suspecting, sooth to say, that it might be some billet-doux of his own, with

the design of returning it to the fair owner. His it was not. On the contrary, the epistle was sealed with a pretty device of doves drinking from the same shallow bowl—an imitation of the exquisite doves of the Vatican—which he himself had given to Lucy, his first pledge of love, and directed in her well-known hand to

MR. WILLATTS,

at the Red Boot,

Bristol Street,

Belford.

Well did William Marshall know this Mr. Willatts ! Well did he know and heartily did he despise this dandy of the Red Boot, who—slim, civil, and simpering, all rings and chains, smirks and grimaces, curls and essences—skipped about in his secondhand coxcombry, as if the vending of earthly boots and shoes were too gross for so ethereal a personage, and glass-slipper maker to Cinderella were his fitting desig-

nation ! William always had disliked him, in virtue of the strong antipathy which opposite holds to opposite ; and now to see a letter to him directed by Lucy,—his Lucy—sealed too with that seal ! “ But she would explain it ! of course she would ! she must, she should explain what motive she could have for writing to such a creature as that, after confessing her love for him, after all had been arranged between her father and himself, and everything was prepared for their marriage before the ensuing Christmas. He had a right to demand an explanation, and ought not to be content with any thing short of the most ample and satisfactory account of the whole matter.”

Just as he had worked himself up to the very climax of angry suspicion, his fair mistress, with her eyes cast down upon the grass, evidently in search of the lost letter, advanced slowly towards the spot. She

started when she saw him, and when he presented the epistle, with a greeting in the true spirit of the above soliloquy, in which a stern and peremptory demand for explanation was mingled with an ironical and contemptuous congratulation upon the correspondent whom she had chosen, her answer, between confusion at the discovery, indignation at the jealousy so openly avowed, and astonishment at the high tone taken by one who had hitherto shown nothing but the gentlest tenderness, displayed so much displeasure, vexation, and embarrassment, that the dialogue grew rapidly into a quarrel, and ended in a formal separation between the lovers. Each party returned home angry and grieved. William most angry, if we may judge from his sending the unlucky filberts, basket and all, floating down the stream; Lucy most grieved, if the crumpled letter and defaced address so nearly washed out by her tears that it

required all the skill and experience of the Belford postmaster to decipher the legend, may be accepted as evidence.

In spite, however, of this token of her fond relenting, the first tidings that William Marshall heard of Lucy, were that she had gone on a visit to her god-mother, twenty miles off. William, on his part, staid at home instructing his pupils as well as he could. In spite of lovers' quarrels the work of the world goes on. To be sure the poor boys wondered why their master, usually so even-tempered, was so difficult to satisfy; and his fond mother could not comprehend why, when she spoke to him, her son, always so mindful of his only remaining parent, answered at cross purposes. But William, although a lover, was a strong-minded man; and before a week had elapsed he had discovered his own infirmity, and had determined to correct it. Accordingly he

opened his desk, took out the map of an estate which he had just finished measuring before the unlucky adventure of the hero of the Red Boot, and having compared his own mensuration of the different fields with the estimated extent, and completed the necessary calculations, had just relapsed into a reverie, when the interruption occurred which formed the beginning of our little story.

Tap ! tap ! tap ! sounded once again, and this time a little impatiently. Tap ! tap ! tap !

“Ah, my good cousin Kate !” said William, at last admitting the poor damsel who had waited this unmerciful while at the door, of which detention our lover had, one hardly knows how, a glimmering consciousness : “I hope you have not been long detained ! Why did not you knock louder ? Do you want my mother ? No ; or you would not have come to the door

of my little room. You want me, Kate, I see. So tell me at once what I can do for you."

And smiling, blushing, and hesitating, Kate confessed "that she did want her cousin William; that she had a letter——" (William started and winced at the very sound)—"a letter to write; and she was such a poor scholar, and the friend who used to write her letters was away; so she had come to trouble cousin William."

"No trouble at all, dear Kate!" replied William, recovering from his confusion, and too much occupied with the recollections awakened by the very name of a letter to observe the embarrassment of his pretty visitor; "no trouble at all. Here is my paper ready. Now begin. Is it to your brother in London?"

"Oh, no!" replied the blushing damsel; "not to my brother: to——a friend."

“Very well!” said William. “The days draw in so fast that it will soon be dark. Begin, dear Kate!”

And after a little hesitation, and playing with a folded letter that she held in her hand, Kate, in a very low, hesitating voice, began to dictate: “Dear Francis”——

“Dear Frances,” echoed her amanuensis, unsuspectingly, in a still lower tone; then pausing, and looking up as expecting her to proceed.

“Stop!” said Kate; “only that it is wrong to give you the trouble to begin again—but that sounds so formal!”

“I think it does,” replied William, dashing his pen rapidly through the words; and the abbreviation is so pretty too. “There,” continued he; “Dear Fanny!—that sounds as well again!”

“Fanny!” exclaimed Kate, half laughing in the midst of her blushes. “Fanny, indeed! Why, cousin William!”——

And cousin William, awaking immediately to the perception of the true state of the case, dashed out the second beginning as rapidly as he had done the first, and laughing with a very good grace at his own stupidity, wrote this time, in full assurance of being right,—

“Dear Frank !”

“Fanny, forsooth !” repeated Kate, still laughing.

“Well but, Kate, remember that I had never heard of this friend of yours. To be sure it was very, very stupid. But now shall we go on with the letter? or may I ask who this Frank”—

“Fanny,” interposed Kate, archly.

“Well! who this Francis is? Does my good aunt know, dear Kate? or”—

“Oh yes, dear William! Mother knows and father knows, and both like him so much! It has been kept a secret till now, because his friends are so much better to

do in the world than mine ! for he is a tradesman, William, going into partnership with his late master ; they are so much richer and grander than father, that we thought they might not like their eldest son to marry a poor working girl. But he said they would only look to good character, and so they say in this letter, and they have consented ; and he told them how you, my own cousin, had got on by your own good conduct, William, and how proud he was of knowing you ”——

“ I know him, then ! ” interrupted William, with pleased curiosity.

“ Yes, to be sure ! Don’t you remember our all drinking tea together at Farmer Wilmot’s last Sunday was three weeks ? Lucy knew it all along.”

“ Frank ! Frank Willatts ? ” inquired William eagerly. “ Was it for you, then, that Lucy wrote that letter ? ”

“ To be sure she did. And were you

jealous of her, William? And was that why she went away? Oh, William, William! to be jealous of dear, good Lucy, because she kept my secret! Oh, cousin William!"

But William was too happy to be very penitent, and Kate was too pleased and too busy to dilate upon his offences. She had her letter to dictate, and, with a little help from her willing amanuensis, a very pretty letter it was; and so completely in charity with all the world, especially with the Franks of the world, was this amanuensis, that, before he had finished Kate's epistle, he had written himself into such feelings of good-will towards her correspondent as to add a most friendly and cousinly postscript on his own account.

What were the contents of the far more ardent and eloquent letter which William Marshall afterwards wrote, and whether he did or did not obtain his mistress's par-

don for his jealousy, and its fruits, we leave to the imagination of our fair readers. We, for our part, knowing the clemency of the sex, incline to think that he did.

THE SIGNAL.

“ Mine honour is my life.”—SHAKSPEARE

“ BE waiting soon after dark, my dearest Leonora, at the balcony of your apartment, and when you see me holding up a torch in the little boat upon the lake, steal unobserved, if possible, from the castle, and come to meet me at the water-side. I must see you ; must pour my sorrows into your sympathizing bosom ; must take leave of you—possibly for ever !

“ Your unhappy Brother,
“ FERNANDO JUAN CARLOS DE GUZMAN.”

For the twentieth time, Donna Leonora read her beloved brother's letter, as she stood leaning upon the beautifully carved stone work of the balcony, watching the appointed signal. Her husband was absent; and the mystery in the delivery of the billet had excited the attention of her serving maidens, Livia and Ursula, and had even awakened in their coarser minds, —accustomed to the not unfrequent flirtations of Spanish beauties,—suspicions that their grave and high-minded lady, hitherto so inaccessible and so spotless, was, at last, about to listen at least to one amongst her innumerable admirers. The disguise of the letter-bearer, and the silence and secrecy of his own approach, were, so far as Don Garcia was concerned, wholly unnecessary. But Donna Leonora, aware of the untamed—perhaps untameable—impetuosity of her brother's character (an only brother, and most fondly beloved),

and of his impatience of contradiction, and doubtful, also, how far what she had to hear might be connected with the political convulsions of these troubled times, and certain of her husband's just reliance upon her affection and prudence, resolved to obey implicitly Don Fernando's directions, to wait in the balcony until she perceived the signal-torch, and then to hasten to meet him by the edge of the lake.

As she stood leaning on the carved stonework, her guitar at her side, the beams of the full moon striking on her rich jewels and her commanding beauty, and illuminating the splendid mansion, of which she was the undisputed mistress (from one of whose opened windows peeped forth the inquisitive and laughing serving maidens), the contrast—that contrast so frequent in this world of contradictions—between the splendour and gaiety of outward circum-

stances, and the cares and anxieties of the inner mind, the wide difference, in short, between appearance and reality, was most strikingly exemplified. To the eye she was bright, fair, sweet, and calm, as the flowers clustered in their sculptured vase, that waved above her head, diffusing beauty and fragrance around her; but, as the flower-leaf is subject to influences from without, shaken by the night wind, and battered by the rain, so is that sentient and delicate blossom, the human heart, liable to be swayed by the changeful gusts of passion and feeling; and, even when in itself equable and firm, it is but too often torn and shattered by sympathy with the sufferings and injuries of the objects of its best affections. And so it fared with the gentle Leonora at this moment, when, awakening from a long reverie, occupied in vain guesses as to the purport of the letter which lay by her side, she glanced sud-

denly down towards the lake, and saw the signal-torch gleaming high above the waters.

In a few minutes the brother and sister were standing together, in earnest conversation beneath a group of cedar, and cypress, and Portugal laurel, through whose dark foliage the moonbeams struck in bright fitful gleams, as the cool breeze of evening swayed the huge branches.

“He insulted me, Leonora, before the whole regiment: called me a rash, hot-headed boy; and when I sent the young Conde de Merida to him, to demand an apology, or to appoint the time and weapons for a meeting, he refused to listen to him or answer him, otherwise than by saying that his regard for my father’s memory, his old comrade in arms, alone prevented him from putting me under arrest for sending a challenge to my superior officer; that for this time he forgave me,

but that I had need look to it, for that the next breach of discipline should be visited upon me with all the rigour of military law. And this from Manuel Hernandez to a descendant of the house of Guzman! And he survives, and I survive! And all redress is closed against me by military discipline, forsooth! Military discipline!! Well, I have removed that barrier, have thrown up my commission; and if, upon my return to Madrid, he refuse me the satisfaction that I require, I will leave Spain—leave Europe! The world does not want wages in which the son of an old Castilian, even if he abandon his estates, his rank, his country, may win for himself enough to maintain life, without forfeiting that without which life is worthless—honour.”

“Alas! my dearest Fernando! my most dear brother!” exclaimed Donna Leonora, in the deepest affliction; “can you speak thus of leaving your country, of abandon-

ing the princely name and the princely home of our ancestors, of deserting now, in the moment when she most needs the defence of every loyal cavalier, the young and innocent sovereign, in the assertion of whose rights you took so vivid an interest; above all, can you think of forsaking me! True, I have a kind and an honourable husband; but even his affection would not suffice for my happiness, if you, the playmate of my childhood, the companion and friend of my maturer years, my dear brother, my only living relation, were to become a wanderer and an exile! Speak to my husband, Fernando; he, too, is a soldier, and a noble Castilian! Consult him. What was the commencement of this unlucky quarrel? Don Manuel Hernandez has a lovely daughter, the Donna Serafina, respecting whom he is known to be singularly tenacious. Surely, her name was not mentioned between ye?"

"His daughter, quotha!" replied the

fiery youth “I never saw her, have hardly heard that such a person existed ! Don Diego Velasquez and myself were speaking of a stranger, clearly a lady of distinction, a beauty whom we had met together on the Prado, and whom I had subsequently seen, oftener indeed than I cared to tell him, at early mass at the church of the Holy Trinity. He dared to compare with this angel, pure, dignified, gracious, and graceful ;—I have never spoken to her, but I am *sure* that she is all this ; there is an evidence of bearing and of countenance, to say nothing of the careful attendance of two old domestics, whose appearance vouches for the station and the character of their mistress—he dared to compare with *her* a Jewish girl, picked up in some of the alleys of the city : and it was my indignation at this insult, offered to a virtuous lady, which provoked the interference of Colonel Hernandez, who had entered un-

observed during the dispute. Don Diego apologised. He is a slight boy ; a trivial jester, who would crack jokes at his mother's death-bed, or his father's tomb : but Hernandez ! And to refuse me all explanation ! all redress ! To disgrace me before my comrades, and then to stand upon his seniority ! his military discipline ! 'The day would come,' he said, 'when I should repent my violence.' Death will arrive before that day ! Farewell, my Leonora ! Women cannot comprehend these feelings ! Schooled before all his officers ! And he expects that I shall submit ! that I shall rejoin the regiment, to be pardoned, it may be, or schooled again ! By St. Jago, the gentleman is modest ! Farewell, my precious sister ! my own Leonora. May the Holy Virgin watch over you ! Forget me, my best Leonora ; I can never forget you." And he broke from her affectionate embrace, leaped into the boat that

awaited him, and rowed rapidly to the opposite shore; where Jose, his faithful domestic, attended with his horses.

The weather was singularly fine even for that delicious climate. The moon, nearly at full, reigned in the clear and deep-blue sky like a milder sun, throwing a silvery light upon the wild and beautiful scenery, the deep and richly wooded glens, threaded by mountain streams, and surmounted by the abrupt precipices and rugged steeps of the Sierra Guadarrama, into the defiles of which a few hours' riding had now brought them. Even the stormy passions of man were insensibly soothed by the peaceful sights and the harmonious sounds of nature, the calm sweetness of the night, the lulling sound of the wind amongst the willows, and distant fall of waters gushing from a rock, and the balmy odours of the cistuses, the wild thyme, and the thousand aromatic herbs that sprang

around him on every side. Unconsciously his anger was yielding to milder thoughts, as he wended his way, taking, at the guidance of Jose, or the will of his steed, the nearest but least-frequented road to Madrid ; when, on emerging from a grove of cork-trees, and entering a straight and narrow valley where the rude cart-track wound between tall and almost inaccessible crags, celebrated as the resort of the banditti, formed in these times of civil war by the refuse of either army, he was startled from his meditations by the repeated sound of a pistol-shot, and the shrill screams of female voices ; and saw right before him, in the moonlight, a carriage drawn by mules, with one or two unarmed attendants, who, overpowered by superiority of numbers, and the suddenness of the attack, were on the point of surrendering to half-a-dozen ferocious-looking savages, armed to the teeth, who were so intent on

their booty, that they did not perceive the new-comers.

“ Carry off the trunks, Pablo ! Take care of the lady, Joachim ! She looks like one for whom we may demand good ransom,” cried the ruffian, who seemed to be their leader.

The reply to this injunction was a shot from Fernando’s pistol, which levelled the wretch to the earth. The faithful Jose seconded his master : the driver of the carriage and the attending servants, encouraged by the unexpected succour, rallied round their lady ; and, in a few minutes the assailants, dismayed by the loss of their captain, and alarmed also by the sound of horses advancing along the highway, fled the field.

Don Fernando advanced to the trembling and frightened travellers (for there were two females ensconced in the calèche), whom he had rescued from worse than death.

“The beauty of the Prado!” cried he, in ecstasy; “the lovely devotee of the Holy Trinity!”

“Serafina, my beloved daughter!” exclaimed the newly-arrived cavalier, joining the group—“and you, senor, her protector, her preserver—how can we repay such services? Don Fernando! Is it indeed, Don Fernando de Guzman?”

“Colonel Hernandez!”—and, without their at all knowing how it happened, the two brave hands were joined in the most cordial grasp of affectionate amity.

“Well, is not this better now, than fighting for neither could tell what?” said Don Manuel, after a few minutes passed in the warmest expressions of gratitude on the part of the father and daughter. “You will understand, my good young friend, that I had heard enough of your conversation with Don Diego, to be convinced that you were speaking of Serafina, without exactly

knowing the degree or the manner of your acquaintance with her. This occasioned my taking up the matter with undue warmth. Upon discovering, however, how matters stood, I was actually on my road to your excellent sister, Donna Leonora, to commission her to mediate between us; and, as you confess to having left her in some trouble, why, I think, with your permission, we had better proceed thither now. She will forgive our untimely visit for the sake of its object."

There is little need to say with how much delight Don Fernando acceded to this proposition; or how much more delicious the silver light of the moon, the lulling sound of wind and waters, and the balmy scent of the shrubs, which hung heavy with the night dew from the romantic defiles of the Sierra Guadarrama, seemed to the lover, when traversed at the side of his beloved.

It was long past midnight when they arrived at the castle, to the unspeakable pleasure of its fair mistress, and a little to the disappointment of her waiting maids, who found, to their no small amazement, that the cavalier of the signal-torch was no other than their lady's own brother.

SIR ALLAN AND HIS DOG.

“Therefore *his* age *was* as a lusty winter,
Frosty, but kindly.”

SHAKSPEARE.

“No, Oscar! no; your young master is deer-stalking to-day. Don’t you hear the gun, which has startled Jessy so woefully? He does not want you just now, Oscar. His view, before firing that startling gun, which, wo is me! will have more than frightened the poor, pretty

deer; for Allan is such a shot, that he seldom misses his aim,—his view, before he frightened Jessy, and awakened the echoes and brought down the red deer with that sudden shot, was to creep towards them quietly and stealthily. He does not want the good hound, Oscar, to-day! Oscar must stay with his mistress.” And as the lovely Agnes Macdonald spoke coaxingly these coaxing words, her small, fair hand thrown around Oscar’s neck, as he stood beside her, the noble animal looked up in her face with his bright, intelligent eyes, delighting in the sweetness of the voice, comprehending, or seeming to comprehend, the meaning of the words, and acquiescing most contentedly in her decision. There was, certainly, no great hardship in standing at the side of Agnes Macdonald, the beautiful and the kind; and with looks that spoke, as plainly as looks could speak, his affection

and his gratitude, her honest and faithful favourite (somewhat of the largest and roughest for a lady's pet), lay down in calm and quiet happiness at her feet.

Her fair companion, the high-born and graceful Jessy Stewart, who, startled, as Agnes had truly said, at the sudden sound of Allan Macdonald's gun, had been standing in some dismay behind her friend, now that the shock was passed, advanced smilingly, and found a seat upon the bank beside her.

“How fond you are, Agnes, of that huge dog! What would the exquisites who hovered round you in London and in Paris say, if they saw you in full dress too, not as I am, snooded and plaided like a Highland lassie, with your jewelled hand resting upon that shaggy head, and his long, rough body reclined upon the satin skirt! What would they say to

that, 'my dainty leddie,' as old Annot is wont to call you?"

"And what matters what they say or think, Jessy?" responded the warm-hearted maiden, kindling into a dignity of youthful beauty and unconscious stateliness, pure, delicate, and graceful as the attitude of a swan upon mountain or lake, or the station of a doe amongst her native glens.

"What care I for the exquisites of Paris or of London? Not half as much as for the mountain posy which you have been collecting—the harebell; and the heather-sprig, and our own elegant and abundant Scottish rose. What is the worth of a 'wilderness of' *such* 'monkeys,' compared to that of our noble, faithful Oscar? What would be the amount of their services in a whole century, measured with those which he has rendered to us? Why, did you never hear," continued Agnes, ob-

serving the surprised look with which her friend regarded her evident excitement; “did you never hear of poor Oscar’s exploits in the hard winter, five years back? No; you were in Germany at the time: and it was before Allan’s attachment and your return of affection (nay, Jessy, a princess would have no cause to blush for loving such a man as my brother); it was before this affiance, so gratifying to us all, had given you a daughter’s interest in the affairs of our house. If you are not afraid of a long story, I will tell you why it is that, from the oldest to the youngest, we all consider Oscar, not merely as a noble animal, but a benefactor and a friend.

“You know the pride and delight of our family, my little sister, Jean; but you did not know the beloved and venerable relative, my dear and excellent grandfather, of whom she was, from the moment she could totter across the room, climb into his lap, and hang prattling round his

neck, the prime pet and favourite. He doted upon the sturdy, hardy, merry little girl, with her joyous smile, and her joyous temper, so fearless, open, frank, and kind; and she, in her turn, idolized the fine, cheerful, benevolent old man, her most alert playmate and most indulgent friend! Oh! how they loved each other! And what a picture it was to see them together! He, at nearly eighty, still upright, robust, and vigorous in form, with a regular, oval countenance, high, noble features, hazel eyes, bright and keen as a falcon's, a mouth of feminine sweetness, a fine open forehead, a magnificent bald head, and long curling hair, as white as the snow on Ben Nevis, contrasting with his clear, ruddy complexion, the very hue of a ripe peach. Oh, what a sight it was to see that beautiful old man, so full of health, and life, and glee, and kindness, tossing about that rosy, laughing child with the activity of youth! never weary of

humouring her pretty fancies, and going even beyond her in innocent mirth, and fun, and frolic. How Jeanie loved him ! How we all loved him, the dear and venerable man ! so generous and frank, so open-hearted and guileless himself, so unsuspecting of guile in others ; so full of honourable thoughts and disinterested and affectionate feelings ! how proud we all were of a relative, whose cheerful and venerable age accorded so well with his virtuous and active youth !

The Southrons, estimating little except the conventional benefits of wealth or station, are apt to sneer at our pride of ancestry ; and perhaps we may a little overvalue that mere string of names, that long roll of parchment, a pedigree ; but a progenitor like Sir Allan Macdonald, or, as he preferred to be called, Kilburnie,—a living example for all that is true, and just, and honourable, and kind, cannot be

too highly appreciated. His family, his clansmen, his very countrymen, were proud of the good old man, whose sweet and genial temperament diffused gaiety and happiness around him. He was a blessing to the whole country. You will be a happy woman, Jessy, if my dear brother, the heir of his estates and his name, should (as Heaven grant he may) fulfil the promise of his youth, and inherit also the frank and winning virtues to which his grandfather owed his extensive and remarkable popularity.

“Sir Allan being a widower, and my mother a widow, she and her three children, Allan, Jeanie, and myself, lived with him at Kilburnie; Jeanie, younger than either of us by ten years, and a posthumous child, being, as I have said, his playmate and companion; whilst Oscar, then in his prime, whom my grandfather, still a keen sportsman, valued above all

greyhounds for his speed (if my venerable kinsman, in his universal candour and charity, had a prejudice, it was against the sleek, high-bred, fine-limbed dogs, which form the pride of the southern courser, and Oscar had won a cup from a round dozen of competitors from Newmarket, brought on purpose to oppose him), and whom Jeanie delighted in for his gamesomeness, was the constant attendant of their long rambles.

“In spring, summer, autumn, and winter, in every season, and in all weathers, would the active old man sally forth with the hardy little girl, sometimes holding him by the hand, or when weary, carried in his arms, and the good hound, Oscar, bounding on before them. He had an innocent pride in dropping in with Jeanie in his hand at houses at a considerable distance, particularly at the residences of his daughters and grandchildren (for his

daughters, older than my father, an only son, and early married, had scattered his descendants over the country), and replying, with a chuckling glee, when questioned about horses and servants, 'that he had walked; that he left such effeminacies as coaches and flunkies to those who needed them, and was ready to dance a reel with the youngest lassie present; and it should go hard but he would tire her down: and Jeanie hersel' will keep it up with any lad of her inches; won't you, Jeanie?' and the vaunt would end by the good old man tossing Jeanie upon his shoulder, and cutting the Highland fling to his own music.

This was his delight: a ball was nothing without his presence. If you had but seen the nod and the wink, the fulness of his glee, the overflow of his good-humour, his archness in suspecting, and sagacity in detecting which lad and

lassie would like to come together for the dance ; ay, and sometimes for longer than the dance ! How he would reconcile old feuds, and cement new friendships ; ay, and how he would use the influence of age, and character, and property, even to the very stretch of his interest, to smooth difficulties, and turn dim and distant wishes into present realities ! Many a hopeful youth has owed his prosperity, many a gentle maiden her happiness, to the unwearied benevolence of the kind and merry Sir Allan.

“ One Christmas he went to Glenmore, accompanied, as usual, by Jeanie and Oscar, to keep the birthday of his favourite daughter, Lady Macleod. My brother was detained at home by a slight indisposition ; and the weather was so severe, that my mother, always delicate, was afraid to venture, I myself being too young to be regularly introduced, and too tall to

pass for a child. Sir Allan had fixed to return on New Year's Eve, the succeeding day being always one of high festivity at Kilburnie, the servants and neighbours dining in the great hall, and the whole castle being alive with festivity and jollity.

It was an occasion on which we felt that he would be very unwilling to absent himself, and yet the day fixed for his return was so tremendous, that we took for granted Lady Macleod would detain her honoured guest at Glenmore. Snow had fallen during the whole of the preceding night, accompanied by a drifting wind, so that to send carriages and horses was impracticable, every vestige of the road, a wild mountain-track, at the best, was impassable, or my brother would have gone under the pretence of fetching Jeanie ; for we all knew well, that the only shade that ever crossed the brightness of our dear

grandfather's countenance, was occasioned by his suspicion of being taken care of,—an affront which the hardy sportsman would have regarded with as much jealousy and displeasure as would be evinced by a veteran of the wars at any precaution that should imply a doubt of his personal prowess.

This consideration alone deterred my brother from setting forth to Glenmore in person ; and as the day grew wilder and wilder, all around, hill, plain, and valley, covered with a sheet of fragile, glittering white, with scarcely an hour's intermission of incessant snowfall, and the night closed in with bitter gusts of wind, which blew the frozen and feathery particles against the face with blinding violence ; even my mother, a nervous and timorous woman, with a revered parent and a beloved child at stake, made up her mind to believe that, as it was evidently impossible that

the expected guests would reach Kilburnie Castle on the morrow, its master would be content to remain where he was. Weather less formidable, so that it might have afforded some chance of his finding the road, or some probability of the arrival of his guests the next day, would have been more alarming. To have stirred out in such a fall as this seemed impossible. So we went to bed in comfort.

“About an hour after midnight we were awakened by a tremendous noise at the gate of the castle, a mixture of scratching and howling. Upon opening the door, it was found to be our friend, Oscar, who, instantly singling out my brother, leaped upon him with a piteous cry, and then went on a little way beyond the gate, returning to see if Allan followed him (who delayed a few minutes to furnish himself with a lantern, and men with hurdles, mattresses, and ropes), pulling him by the

coat-skirts with the most 'urgent whine, wagging his tail when he began to move, and enticing him forward by every means in his power. Oh, I shall never forget the poor dog's piteous ways, his trembling earnestness, his eager looks, and the expression of his anxious cry—no human voice could have conveyed his meaning more distinctly. Never shall I forget that moment, nor the hour of agonizing suspense that followed."

"They were saved?" inquired Jessy, anxiously, breaking silence for the first time.

"Oscar led his party to a hollow by the hill-side, about three miles distant; and there the venerable old man was found leaning against the rock in a half-recumbent posture, so as to shelter the child, who was clasped to his bosom. The snow was gathering around them. Sleep had crept upon both, and, in another hour, all help would have been unavailing."

“ But they *were* saved ?” again inquired Jessy.

“ Thanks to Oscar’s fidelity and intelligence, they were. By proper care, they both recovered sufficiently to dance at the proposed festival on Old New Year’s Day. Our dear grandfather lived in health and happiness until last year, just before we had the happiness of renewing our friendship with your family ; and Jeanie is, you know, as lively and as lifelike a little personage as treads this most excellent earth. And now, my dearest Jessy, do you wonder that Oscar—look at him, poor fellow, he knows that we are talking of him !—Do you wonder that this noble and sagacious animal should be my pet ?”

THE CARTEL.

“Gaoler, look to him;—tell not me of mercy.”

SHAKESPEARE.

“FLEE, I beseech thee, Isidore! If the peace and comfort—(why do I name such words)—if the very existence of thy poor wife be dear to thee—I implore thee flee! By the memory of our young loves, by the happy days we have known together—by that closer and dearer tie, the sorrows that we have shared—by the precious

boy at whose couch we watched in vain—by the smiling girl who now lies lapped in the unconscious sleep of infancy—by the dead for whom we mourned—and by that living blessing whom God in His mercy sent to compensate that mighty woe—by a father's hopes and a father's duties I conjure thee, flee! See, I am tall—the cloak hangs nearly as low over thy ancles as over mine, thou need'st but droop a little thy manly form as if in grief—oh! what wife could walk erect from the prison of her husband!—thou hast but to draw the capote over thy brow, and to let fall the veil, and hold thy handkerchief to thy eyes—alas! did I ever leave thee other than weeping?—and thou wilt pass undiscovered. Or suffer me to arrange this hair, and thou mayest defy detection. Dost thou not remember how often in our wooing days we have passed for brother and sister?

How often thou thyself hast vowed, when thy comrades have been vaunting the delicate bloom of their blue-eyed maidens, that thou didst rather prize the swart skin and jetty eye of the rich South than the dainty red and white of their rose-lipped beauties. Alas! it was the love in that eye that won thy heart. And canst thou now resist its appeal, now that love and life hang upon thy consent? Flee, my Isidore! if thy wife, if thy child be dear to thee, wrap thee in this disguise and flee!"

"And leave thee here to perish!"

"Nay, my husband, nay! not to perish, but to join thee speedily in some distant land, and live a calm and blissful life in safety and in freedom. Wrap thyself in this cloak, and away. Away then, I conjure thee! The patrolle will soon go their rounds, and the sentinel who is now on duty will be changed. Nay, I have

not taken him into our counsel. Look not reproachfully. But well I know that André Duval will show nought but respect and sympathy when he sees me, or one whom he takes for me, pass in sorrow from the place. Dally no longer. Lisette waits without to conduct thee to her mother's abode, one of the old niches about Notre Dame, where thou mightest be safe for ages. There thou shalt stay until the search be passed, and then we will depart for America. Nay, wherefore shake thy head? I shall be safe and free. Be sure of that. The Imperial Josephine, although even she may not venture to intercede for one who has so transgressed the hard iron martial law as to challenge his superior officer, will yet full surely protect her favoured hand-maiden—one whose wedding she was graciously pleased to honour with her presence,—from the effects of her wifely love. Alas, was I

not the wretched cause of this calamity? Is it not through thy love for me that thou art still in prison? and wilt thou deny me the blessed privilege of setting thee free?"

And no longer able to resist her persuasions, Colonel de Gourbillon did submit to array himself in Adèle's garments, and, having safely passed the sentinel on guard, was in a few minutes following the steps of Mademoiselle Lisette from the prison of La Force to the precincts of Notre Dame.

The escape was complete and successful: but an unexpected circumstance rendered poor Adèle's stratagem unavailing, and replaced Isidore once again in his dungeon, and in all the peril attendant upon a breach of military law under the iron rule of Napoleon.

* * * * *

It was a right queenly chamber tha

boudoir, into which the soft air of an April morning stole so wooingly ; and yet its pervading beauty spoke rather of elegance than of splendour. The prevailing taste of its fair and gentle mistress was everywhere visible. Flowers, pictured to the life by the deft needle of the embroideress, bordered the pale pink hangings, which shed a tender blush over the apartment ; flowers, bright from the loom of Arras, seemed strewn in gay confusion over the rich but delicate carpet ; flowers, fresh from the dewy gardens, glowed in the flower-painted jars of Sèvres porcelain, which crowded the marble tables, whilst plants, the fairest and choicest of the hot-house and conservatory, were grouped in alabaster vases, catching the soft light of the veiled windows.

On a Grecian couch, near a half-curtained recess, sat a gracious and graceful lady, the fitting inmate of this scene of

enchantment. Her dress, even to the lilies in her bosom and the Provence rose in her hand, was of pure and spotless white, the most exquisite in texture and most becoming in form. Her shape and features were faultless in contour and expression. If the bloom of youth were faded, it was more than replaced by sweetness and sensibility. At the moment of which we write, that lovely countenance wore the gentlest look of pity as she addressed a sad and weeping lady, who had just been admitted to her presence:—

“Ma pauvre Adèle! I had hoped and believed that you were still the joyful occupant of your husband’s prison. I never thought to be so sorry to see you at St. Cloud. Colonel de Gourbillon is then retaken?”

“Not retaken, may it please your Majesty: he accomplished his escape in safety, and reached a retreat where he

might have remained undiscovered until the day of doom; but the sentinel who watched the door of his cell on the evening of his departure was to be held responsible for his prisoner. Had not Isidore surrendered himself, that poor soldier must have now been the victim; and dearly as I love my husband, or rather, because I do love him dearly, I could not have wished him so saved. He is again in prison, and the sentinel free."

"Was that sentinel an accomplice in the escape?"

"No, on my word of honour, gracious Madam. He was my foster brother, the son of my good old nurse, and would not, as we well knew, raise the veil, or pull away the handkerchief from, as he supposed, a weeping wife, as a rougher warder might have done; but we took more than common pains to preserve him from all suspicion of our plans, for his sake and

our own. Poor André! he at least will escape!"

"And after all, what was the cause of this unhappy challenge?"

"Alas! alas! royal Madam, I was the thrice unhappy and most unconscious cause! Walking on the Boulevard Italien with Madame le Vasseur, General Villaret, heated, as he says, by wine, and mistaking me for my cousin, Pauline de St. Brie (your Imperial Majesty has often noticed our sister-like resemblance), to whom, as it now appears, he has been for some months secretly married, accosted me in a manner which occasioned me the most lively alarm. My husband came up at the moment; the General, certainly not himself, and hardly aware of his mistake, treated the matter with provoking levity. Madame le Vasseur's presence and my tears, put, for the time, an effectual check on Isidore. He hurried us home, and then

*

wrote that unhappy letter,—that challenge to a superior officer,—which falling, I hardly know how, into the hands of the minister at war, constitutes the sole and fatal proof of his breach of martial law; for General Villaret, as much distressed as man can be, and full of self-blame and self-accusation, denies all recollection, except of his own misconduct. O! if that fatal letter could be regained or destroyed! or if the real facts of the case could be brought under the notice of him in whose word will lie the final sentence,—the awful doom of life or death. O! if he could know the provocation, the palliation! he, that soul of honour, who holds his Imperial Consort's purity as the brightest jewel of his crown. How often have we heard him quote Cæsar's axiom—"

Here a slight movement of caution, and perhaps of uneasiness on the part of Josephine, and a noise like the rustling of

papers, suddenly stopped Adèle's pleadings, and directed her attention to the half curtained recess. It opened on a small turret chamber, fitted up as a private study, and at a writing table, folding a letter, sat a gentleman, plainly dressed in a single-breasted green coat, a white kerseymere waistcoat, and the ribbon of the legion of honour at his button-hole. His little cocked hat was on a chair at his side; and although his noble head was bent over the letter which he was folding, Adèle felt, at once, that it was no other than Napoleon. Papers were strewed before him, and amongst these the eyes of the trembling wife rested upon her husband's well-known writing, the challenge upon which his fate and hers depended.

The Emperor paused in his occupation, and applied to his snuff-box for his habitual luxury; his countenance was calm and untroubled, and, but for a momentary

glance towards the curtained doorway, it might have been doubted if he were conscious that he was not alone.

“Speak !” whispered Josephine, encouragingly. “Plead your husband’s cause !”

Five minutes before, Madame de Gourbillon would have given her right hand for such an opportunity. Now it had arrived, and between reverential awe of her great master and the tremendous interest which she had at stake, she knelt before him, weak and wordless as a child.

“Pardon, Sire ! pardon !” Her voice died away, and had not a passion of tears come to relieve her she would have fainted.

Napoleon made no answer. He was about to seal the letter which he had folded, and selecting a paper from the table, he first used it to light the wax taper which stood in a richly chased golden candlestick by his side, and then flung it

into the brazier, tapping his snuff-box as he watched the burning fragments, and glancing upon the happy wife, and her sympathizing mistress, with a smile exquisite in its sweetness and beauty. Perhaps at that moment his sensations were the most enviable of the three.

Need I say that the paper which he had destroyed was the only proof of Isidore's guilt—the all-important cartel?

THE RETURN FROM THE FAIR.

“For love thou know’st is full of jealousy.”

SHAKSPEARE.

It was on a bright balmy evening towards the end of July, that half the population of this sunny side of Berkshire were pouring through the suburbs of Belford Regis, on their return from the annual festival, popularly called the Cherry Fair, because it forms the great mart for the waggon-loads of that luscious fruit, which

blacken the orchards, skirt the beech woods, and dot the commons, of that wild and beautiful tract of country which runs along the northern banks of the Thames. Carriages of every variety, from the lordly landau (our story bears date some five and forty years back), with its four prancing steeds and its liveried outriders, to the humble caravan crowded with women and children, already fretful from the fatigue which, in lower as in higher life, treads so close upon the heels of pleasure ; all sorts of wheeled vehicles—chariots, phaetons, curricles, gigs, and carts ; horsemen of every rank, and foot-people of all ages and denomination ; some tipsy, some sober, some merry, some sad, all came pouring from the fair ; and the stir and movement of the different groups, the sound of so many passengers, talking, laughing, hallooing, and whooping, mingled with the distant noises of the scene of action, where

the ringing of bells, the beating of drums, the lowing of cattle, and the blowing of trumpets, contended with, and at times nearly overpowered, the mingled hum of the multitude, formed a scene, which, lighted by the bright beams of a midsummer sun, and fanned by the pleasant evening breeze, had something peculiarly exhilarating in its aspect and character.

Standing upon the hill which parts Belford Regis from Aberleigh, and looking towards the old town, its towers and steeples glittering in the sunshine, its venerable buildings mingled with groves and gardens, and crowned with terraces of a lighter and gayer style of architecture, the clear waters of the Kennet spanned by noble bridges and crowded with barges and pleasure vessels, whilst river, bridges, streets, and quays, were all alive with the gay and stirring population, rolling its apparently inexhaustible tides upward from the good

town, and then onward through broad avenues and tufted lanes, into the neighbouring country beyond ; looking from the point, it was scarcely possible for the coldest observer not to be gratified by a spectacle so full of innocent, although somewhat boisterous, gaiety, and wide-spreading enjoyment.

Among the most gratified of these spectators was a somewhat stern-looking dame, who sat in her own porch before a small farm-house, just without the suburbs of Belford Regis, and took off her spectacles, and laid aside her knitting, to survey her pretty grand-daughter Susan, who, followed by two fine boys, her brothers, one beating most lustily a child's drum, the other shouldering with great pride and valour a toy musket, approached slowly from the fair.

Susan Wharton was one of the prettiest lasses of the country side, and her sweet-

ness and modesty equalled her beauty. She and her brothers were orphans, but had been carefully brought up by her father's mother, the venerable matron of the knitting-needle and the spectacles, who, having a small but excellent pasture-farm close to the town, and being an active, stirring, bustling dame, accomplished in all the arts of the dairy, contrived to make a good living for herself and her grandchildren by supplying the inhabitants with cream, milk, butter, and other pastoral luxuries. Lone woman though she were, the world had gone well with her, and she had scarcely known a care since the sudden and almost simultaneous death of her son and her son's wife, except indeed the dread occasioned by the perversity and headstrong temper of Robert Goring, her pretty grand-daughter's favoured suitor, who, whenever a fit of jealousy came across him, which was far oftener than

ought to have occurred, considering the reserve and prudence of his fair mistress, (but when did jealousy listen to reason!) was sure to avenge himself by threatening to turn soldier; a threat of all others most grievous to Dame Wharton's ears, whose eldest grandson, having enlisted during his father's life, had thereby occasioned to his affectionate relatives a species of trouble and anxiety unknown in the traditions of that peaceful family since the time of a certain Rupert Wharton, some great-great-great-grandfather of poor James, who had followed the fortunes of his illustrious namesake, and fallen in the king's service during the civil wars.

Jem's delinquency, and the threat to follow his example so frequently held out by Robert Goring, had so strongly impressed Dame Wharton's imagination, that her natural pride and pleasure at the sight of her blooming grandchildren was some-

what lessened by the martial array in which the two boys presented themselves.

“ I suppose it ’s some foolish present of Robert Goring’s,” said the good dame to her faithful adherent, Jenny Stubbs, a short damsel, who assisted in the care of the cows, as well as in carrying milk and butter about the town, and had been left to attend her mistress during the absence of her grandchildren ; “ It ’s certainly some folly of Robert’s, for I am sure that Susan would never have given the boys such nonsensical toys, fit only to put war, and soldiering, and such nonsensical notions into their heads, poor children ! But where is Robin ?” added she, as Susan approached ; “ and what ring is that upon your finger ? You have not gone to church without leave or licence, to be sure, Susan, now that all ’s arranged for your being married at Christmas, when Robert is settled in his own little farm ? I wonder

what his uncle, Master Goring, the cooper, who has been as good as a father to him, would say to that. Speak, child, can't you? Are you married?—yes or no? or has Robert bought the ring beforehand, and got you to put it on in this way to make a fool of your old grandmother?"

"No, indeed," returned Susan! "I would not have done anything so disrespectful to you, grandmother, for twenty Robins. This is no wedding-ring."

"No?" said her grandmother, assuming her spectacles to take a second view of the slender finger and the glittering gem which encircled it; and comparing both with her own hard, ruddy hand, "No!" exclaimed she, eyeing it more intently, "this gim-crack isn't such a ring as I was married with. But why dost wear it upon thy wedding-finger, child? and who gave it to thee? Eh? Robin? Ah! he's a foolish boy to throw away so much money. I warrant

it cost a good half-guinea. And the boys and their nonsense ! Ah ! those young heads ! I warrant he's been finely cheated ! Robert bought it in the fair ?”

“ No indeed, grandmother !” responded Susan.

“ Not Robert ! Who then ?” inquired Dame Wharton, with great sternness. “ How dare you accept a present from any one else ? Ah, child ! child ! she that takes rings from fresh acquaintance little deserves that an honest man should seek to put one upon her wedding-finger. Who gave it to you, hussy ? speak, I say ! Who gave you the ring ?”

“ I must not tell you his name, dear grandmother,” began Susan, with great agitation ; “ I have promised not to tell ! You wrong me, grandmother ! indeed you do !” sobbed the weeping beauty. “ It was no fresh acquaintance ! Indeed, indeed it was not ! but I cannot tell his

name. I have promised not to tell any one, not even Robert or you !”

“ Athk me,” interrupted the young gentleman with the musket, interposing between his angry grandmother and his frightened sister, with an alacrity and boldness of bearing, which together with his readiness and shrewdness of speech contrasted laughably with an infantine lisp, from which Ned, his younger brother, (he of the drum,) was perfectly free.

“ Athk me, gwandmother, and don’t thcold poor thither Thuthan ! Athk me ; I know the whole thtowy,” pursued Master Willy, shifting his weapon most energetically with both hands from shoulder to shoulder.

“ Brother Jem, the soger ’s come to Belford !” bawled Ned, shouting at the top of his voice to overcome the noise of his own drum.

“ Yeth,” resumed Willy, “ when bwo-

ther Dzem put the wing on thithter Thuthanth finger he pwomethed to make me a dwummer, a weal dwummer, not a tham, like Ned, but a weal dwummer" ——

"And me a fifer!" shouted Ned, still accompanying himself with his noisy instrument.

"Ath thoon ath ever I wath ath tall ath the muthket; pwovided," resumed this discreet keeper of secrets, "pwovided we never thaid a thyllable of hith being at the fair! A weal dwummer! think of that!"

"And a real fifer!"

"Dwummer and fifer, fifer and dwummer," shouted the boys in chorus! "And bwother Dzem can make me a dwummer," added Master Willy, in a confidential whisper addressed to his grandmother, "for he 'th a therdzeant and wearth a thwath! — a therdzeant with a thilk thwath!"

"Not silk," interposed Ned; "worsted."

“Thilk, I thay ” rejoined Willy.

And the one beating a grand tattoo, and the other shouldering arms, off the two boys marched, each shouting at the top of his childish voice, “Thilk !” “Worsted !” “Worsted !” “Thilk,” until the sound was lost in the distance.

“Jem a serjeant ! and at Belford ! But why not come here, Susan ? and why desire you to keep his being there a secret ? I don’t see any wisdom in such secrets,” said the good dame, shaking her head. “And poor Robin, what ’ll he say, I wonder ? And why does Jem desire you to wear this foolish ring ? It ’s enough to make the lad enlist in good earnest.”

“Why, dear grandmother, that’s the very thing that Jem wants ; not that he should enlist in reality, grandmother ; nor that he should go for a soldier ; but to cure him of these threats and jealousies. Somebody told James, who came to Bel-

ford this morning recruiting, how foolish Robin had been about Harry Goddard and George Elton, and everybody who spoke to me or looked at me, whether I spoke to them or not. So when I met him, and—oh dear, grandmother, what a fine stately man he is grown!—and when he found me out (for he hardly knew me at first), and had kissed me and hugged the boys—how pleased he was with Willy—he insisted on my taking this ring, which he received from some great lady to whom he had done a service abroad, and brought it here that it might be sold and serve for my marriage-portion: he insisted on my wearing it on my wedding-finger, and not satisfying Robin's curiosity farther than by telling him solemnly that no lover gave it to me; so that either he might put such a trust in my word and my truth as a husband ought to put—or, if that were

too good to happen, that he might enlist in James's own party, and so be let off to-morrow after having a good fright. I was not willing to play poor Robin such a trick; for you know, dear grandmother, there was little chance if he saw the ring but he would fly off; only James insisted on the misery of a jealous husband—and so—”

“And so Robert did see the ring, and did fly off? I thought something was amiss when you came home without him,” said the grandmother.

“Yes!” sighed Susan, “he did see the ring, poor fellow! as soon as ever he rejoined me: he had been to help his aunt and cousins into their cart when I met James; he did see the ring, and asked me over and over again how I came by it, and who gave it to me. Willy and Ned were gone with James to see Punch and the wild beasts, or else—but I had pro-

mised James not to tell. And, thank Heaven, Robert said nothing of enlisting this time. So that I hope all will go right."

"Heaven send it may!" said her careful grandame; "but I love no secrets, and playing at enlisting is playing with edge-tools. Hearken, Susy! if Robert should come here to-night, send him to me. I must go see after the skimming!" and with a nod as eloquent as Lord Burleigh's, the good dame repaired to her dairy.

Susan, although somewhat comforted by Dame Wharton's last speech, could not quite get rid of certain apprehensions that clung about her. She hummed unconsciously her grandmother's favourite ditty—

"I hate yon drum's discordant sound,
Parading round, and round, and round"—

whenever the distant noise of the recruit-

ing party reached her from the town, or the din of poor Ned's new toy echoed through the mansion; and over and over again did she lament the attractions of Punch, and of the lions, elephants, and monkeys which had detained Willy from her side at a moment when his genius for explanations would have been invaluable to her unhappy lover; for accustomed to love Robert, faults and all, and almost persuaded to consider his rash and violent, but often repented and easily appeased jealousy, as a proof of the strength of his passion, the soft-hearted beauty was more alive to the danger of losing her betrothed than to the peril in which this solitary failing might place her future happiness. She even contemplated the possibility of sending Willy in quest of her luckless swain; but again the great show of wild beasts stood in her way. It had so happened that poor

Robin himself, always generous, especially to the boys whom their sister loved so dearly, had presented them the Christmas before with a Dutch toy called a Noah's Ark, consisting of a curiously fashioned compound of boat and house, filled not merely with the quaintly habited wooden figures representing the Patriarch's family, attired with an amplitude of apparel and a splendour of colouring which did honour to the Hollander's fancy, but with a variety of pairs of animals decked in hues almost as splendid and quite as unlike nature as those with which the Dutch artist had bedecked our antediluvian progenitors. Over this toy, preserved for them with great care by the grandmother, the young students in natural history were quietly seated, so deeply engaged in comparing those beasts which they had seen in the morning with their wooden prototypes in the

Ark (where, by the way, they were most inartificially stowed one above the other, the receptacle being scarcely capable of containing them when shoved in *en masse*, whence divers accidents to leg and tail, head and horn), that nothing short of a proposal to revisit Signor Polito's menagerie could have stirred them.

"I hate yon drum's discordant sound,
Parading round, and round, and round,"

half sung, half sighed, poor Susan.

"I hate yon dwom'th dithecordant thound,
Pawading wound, and wound, and wound,"

gaily echoed Master Willy.

"No, Ned," added the young gentleman, snatching from his little brother's hand a mutilated nondescript, minus three legs, one tail, and half a head, and prof-

fering in its place another monster cut asunder in the middle like Baron Munchausen's horse, and presenting a formidable horned head and two fore legs, sans the body and hind quarters usually found in quadrupeds of all descriptions.

"That'th a mithtake. Thith ith the other theep."

"That!" rejoined Ned, "that's as red as Cherry's calf. It's a lion."

"A lion!" repeated Willy contemptuously; "a lion with hornth! Look at the wam'th hornth! Thithter Thuthan, look! It'th a wam. Thee the hornth. Gwandmother callth Dzonth the thaddler ath cwooked ath a wam'th horn. It 'th a wam! Look, thithter Thuthan! thome theep are black, and thome may be wed. Ith'nt it a wam, Thuthan? Ithn't Ned wong?"

Susan suggested that, so far as could be judged from the relics of the animal, both were probably mistaken, those inte-

resting remains bearing most resemblance to a cow—an undignified solution of the enigma which united both disputants against their fair referee; and Dame Wharton returning from the dairy, and summoning the boys to supper and to bed, Susan reluctantly abandoned all hope, for that evening at least, of undeceiving her devoted but irascible lover.

Before dawn the next morning the young damsel, who slept in a small chamber of which the casement overhung the garden, heard a low tap at her window, accompanied by the peculiar bird-like whistle which had so often summoned the rustic Juliet, late and early, to the brief delight of a stolen dialogue with her enamoured Romeo.

Wrapping a large cloak about her, Susan stood leaning her hand against the open window.

“Robin! dear Robin!”

Robert could not see the rosy lips which spoke these few and simple words, but the tone, sweet, gentle, caressing, affectionate, implied all that could be imagined of truth and tenderness. It was a tone as sweet and open as her own sweet smile. He mustered all his indignation to resist the charm, and succeeded.

“I come here, Susan,” said Robert, in low, resolute accents, “to ask you, for the last time, from whom, and for what purpose, you received the ring which I saw you wear yesterday. By Heaven, I see it now glittering in the moonlight. Answer this question, or we part for ever.”

“It is a question, Robin, which I have promised not to answer at present. I can only tell you that I received it from no one who can interfere with our attachment. More I must not, cannot, tell!”

“Must not! cannot! say will not!” rejoined Robert, in a voice of deep and

concentrated anger. "Say will not, Susan! Once again, and for the last time, I ask you this plain question,—From whom did you receive this gewgaw? Answer! or may my right hand be struck off before I place the wedding-ring on your finger!"

"Oh, dearest Robin! grant me but a few short hours. Believe my word, dear Robert. Confide in my affection, in my faith!" exclaimed the poor girl, as her lover turned furiously away; "or ask my grandmother," added she; or inquire of Willy; they are bound by no promise," continued she, not regarding in her anxiety how much she was infringing her own. But if she did break her word it was to little purpose; the jealous lover fled from the garden unhearing or unheeding; and although no threat of enlisting had been spoken, no farewell had been breathed, she remained persuaded that he had taken his measures, and with something

very like a presentiment that her brother's hasty plan would, as deception, however well intended, often does, lead to evil rather than to good. And so it proved.

Before noon on the next day James Wharton learnt that Robert Goring had enlisted the night before, not with his party, but with one belonging to another regiment stationed in Belford for the occasion of the fair; that, immediately upon ascertaining that Susan still refused to answer his question, he had repaired to *his* Sergeant Kite to announce his continued desire to enter the service; that as soon as admittance could be obtained, he had been examined and attested before the mayor and other magistrates; and that he and the recruiting party were by that time some miles on their way to the dépôt of the regiment. It was in the very heat of the Peninsular War; men were scarce, especially men so tall and finely formed,

so spirited and so active as poor Robert. It was impossible to procure his release, and James and his sister were left to bewail the ill consequences of his unlucky experiment, and Dame Wharton to lament, again and again, the evil destiny which led her descendants, and those connected with them, to go, as she phrased it, a *sogering*. The only comfort she derived upon the occasion (next, perhaps, to that general scolding of the guilty and the innocent, the efficacy of which as a consolation under affliction is well known to most ancient dames well to do in the world, who wear spectacles, knit stockings, and love their own way), her prime comfort consisted in cutting Ned's drum to pieces, to the great improvement of the tranquillity of the rustic homestead, and in throwing Willy's musket into the fire.

* * * * *

Years passed away. The poor boys

grown into fine stout lads, tended the cows and carried the milk through the streets of Belford Regis; exhibiting no more dangerous warlike propensities than an inordinate ambition on the part of Willy to possess a gun for the purpose of shooting sparrows. Nothing had been heard of Robert; and James Wharton, now serjeant-major of his regiment, remained at a distance, sharing the perils and the victories of the British army. Still, however, Dame Wharton, all peaceful as were her inclinations, had the ill luck to find the destinies of those she loved unexpectedly influenced by the warlike spirit of the times. Poor Susan, restless and unhappy at home had entered into the service of her noble landlord's daughter, as her own woman; and, during the short peace which preceded Napoleon's return from Elba, the Lady Anne had been wooed and won by one of the gallant staff which surrounded the

great Duke; and too much attached to her husband to remain at a distance from the field of action, the young bride and her favourite waiting-maid were actually in Brussels during the crowning victory of Waterloo.

* * * * *

“You are a soldier’s sister, Susan,” said the Lady Anne to her attendant, with her usual sweet grace, a few days after the great battle; “have you any objection to go with me this morning to the military hospital? A private belonging to my husband’s division threw himself between him and a French cuirassier who was about to cut him down with his sabre, and received the blow destined for Sir Charles. Of course every care has been taken of him, and he is likely to recover, poor fellow, thank Heaven! but I wish to carry him a few comforts, to see with my own eyes

that he is kindly attended, and thank him with my own lips for preserving a life dearer than my own. Charles has sent to the surgeon to be in waiting: so order the carriage, and we will set forth."

Laden with comforts and restoratives, mistress and maid proceeded to the hospital, neither of them perhaps quite prepared for the inevitable horrors of the scene. Crowds of soldiers, for the most part severely wounded, filled the apartment into which they were ushered. Pain and death seemed busy around them. Sufferings, only the more affecting for the bravery with which they were borne, spoke in every countenance. Young, timid, and softly-nurtured, the Lady Anne, overcome by such a realization of the miseries of war as her imagination, even so close to the scene, had hardly pictured, delivered to the friendly surgeon a slip of paper upon which the name of her husband's

preserver was written. He led the way to a bed near a window.

“Poor fellow ! his wars are over ! Nay, nay, your Ladyship must not misunderstand me. His life is in no danger ; but he has been compelled to submit to amputation : and as his friends are said to be well off, why the empty sleeve, in his case, will be only——”

His speech was checked by a sudden exclamation, almost a shriek, from his patient.

“Susan ! Susan Wharton ! my Susan !”

“Robin ! dear Robin !”

Lady Anne knew the story, and witnessed the recognition with the sympathy of a young unpractised heart. She too had loved a soldier ; and the poor sufferer now before her had received his hurt in that dear soldier’s defence. Tears contended with smiles as she gazed upon the couple, already reunited, for Susan was

hanging over the couch, and her hand was locked in that of Robert. He looked at her wedding-finger: the ring was gone.

“Robin! dear Robin!” Her voice failed her.

“I know what you would say, Susan!” replied Robert. “It was your brother James. We met in Spain and he told me the whole truth. Do you remember my wicked vow? I am a poor maimed object now, Susan; I have no right hand to put the wedding-ring upon that dear finger——”

“But you can put the ring on with the left, dear Robin! You can put it on with the left!” said Susan, smiling through her tears: and never, in spite of pain, and wounds, and danger, and suffering, throbbed two happier hearts than those of the reconciled lovers, in the crowded wards of the Brussels hospital.

THE KING'S PAGE.

"If thou be he, then art thou prisoner"

SHAKSPEARE

THERE have been prisons of more pretension, as witness the cells of the Inquisition, and places of exile of grander name, the frozen deserts of Siberia for instance, or the sweltering swamps of Surinam; but for a chill, barren, heart-breaking monotony—a weary, dreary, dragging on of life, when all that renders life bearable is taken

away, commend me to a Prussian fortress during the reign of that literary coxcomb, small poet, eminent soldier, sad despot, but tolerably amusing, and by fits tolerably well natured personage, Frederick, misnamed the Great. To be sure the inmates, if it be true that the misfortunes of others convey some consolation in calamity, had the wretched comfort of knowing that from the whole country, flat, dull, and ugly enough at the best, being little better than a camp or a battle plain ; the towns and cities, huge barracks ; and every citizen, from the tottering great grandfather to the infant in the cradle, a soldier, past, present, or future, responsible for the slightest infringement of an all but impracticable military code ; there was not an individual in the kingdom who might not be in an instant imprisoned like themselves. But without venturing to dispute the general truth of Rochefoucault's celebrated maxim,

it may be doubted whether the captive, pacing for the millionth time the stone floor of his dungeon, and vainly trying to divine the fault for which he was incarcerated, could derive much pleasure from reflecting that half his friends and kinsmen might at some future day be in equal jeopardy.

Next in discomfort to the prisoners within those dismal cells, were the jailers, who kept ward without, and who, cooped up between the walls of the fortress, were, as compared to those whom they guarded, pretty much as birds in an aviary compared with the same order of feathered bipeds in a cage. At Spandau the commandant, Major Kleinwitz, an invalid soldier, found so much difficulty in obtaining assistants for Hans Klaus, who had the dungeons in charge, that he thought himself lucky in gaining the service of a pretty youth, who called himself Wilhelm

Steinfort ; an orphan, who, having recently lost an only brother, cared, he said, nothing for the world without the walls, and showed great zeal in assisting Klaus ; who, lame from the consequences of an old wound, found much difficulty in passing up and down the steep stone stairs, whilst carrying their scanty meals to the miserable inmates of the cells.

Two or three, distinguished by triple padlocks, each boasting its different keys—keys whose intricacy and convolutions seemed dim forebodings of the wonders of Bramah,—were reserved by Klaus for his own especial attendance. One should think that Wilhelm saw enough of the poor captives ; but these prisoners seemed to excite his curiosity not a little. One morning, taking advantage of a fit of good humour on the part of his master, and of his master's lady and mistress, Madame Klaus, he prevailed upon him to allow

each of the poor wretches a solitary walk in a small yard, closed in on every side by the steep walls of the fortress, and scarcely even at noon-tide admitting one glimpse of the blessed sun ; and as they emerged, pale and haggard, into the light of day, he brushed the tears from his eyes, and gazed upon their wasted forms and wan complexions, with the eagerness with which a mother would seek for a missing child. Apparently Wilhelm's search had been in vain. One prisoner amongst those most carefully guarded, and one alone, had not shared an indulgence too dangerous for repetition. Wilhelm, as soon as he ascertained the fact, hastened to the triply locked door. "Max !" and the exclamation of surprise and joy with which that earnest whisper was acknowledged and reciprocated told at a word that the search was at an end.

For three weary days, days which,

although really of the shortest in January, seemed long as those of June, the triply barred door, with its panels of oak and studs of iron, remained betwixt them, a tantalizing and inexorable barrier. At last, Chance, always the good friend of those who watch to avail themselves of the opportunities which she presents, took the guise of a north-east wind, which affected Hans's wounded leg with as many aches and twinges as Prospero inflicted upon Caliban ; and visited the wife of his bosom, Madame Klaus, with such a fit of rheumatic gout, most aristocratic of diseases, as would have done honour to a baroness of sixteen quarters. Hans Klaus could not have walked across the court to have exchanged the warder's keys for a field-marshal's baton ; and Dame Gertrude could not have undone the easiest of the three padlocks to have been made first lady of the key to the empress. So they were forced to dele-

gate the office of bread-and-water carrier to the young boy Wilhelm.

“Max!” “Agatha!” And the twin brother and sister, for such they were, lay bathed in tears of mingled joy and sorrow, in each other's arms.

“How came you here?” asked Agatha, when their emotion had in part subsided; “You, Max von Lindorff, the King's Page, the favourite, trusted and beloved almost like a son! What can have been your offence? How came you here?”

“I can as little guess the cause of this imprisonment as you, sweet sister! I had served the King with wine the night before, as he sate at supper with M. de Voltaire and other gay and witty Frenchmen, himself gayest of all. The next morning Adolf von Rosenthal—Agatha, I cannot see your blushes, but this trembling hand tells of feelings which he would be right glad to hear! Adolf

avowed his love, and craved my intercession; and I was in the act, after one or two attempts, of sealing a letter to you, when the officer on guard, Count Waldemar, entered my apartment, put me under arrest, and whirled me off here to Spandau without a moment's pause. As little as yourself can I guess the cause. And now let me ask of you the same question. How came *you* hither, sister mine?"

Agatha hesitated, and the little hand which had before betrayed her consciousness again trembled, as the brother pressed it in his: "The Baron von Rosenthal"—she faltered; and her brother filled up the pause.

"Adolf! aye, doubtless, he ascertained my destination from Count Waldemar, and then communicated the intelligence to you. No truer friend than Adolf von Rosenthal! and yet I would not be sure that my calamity was altogether unwelcome, since it

procured him admission to his lady love. But now, dearest, away ! Dally here no longer ! leave the dungeon and the fortress ! lay aside your disguise"——

"Instantly, dear Max," interrupted she, laughing, and beginning to divest herself of cap and doublet, and to replace them by her brother's habiliments : "Instantly ! we have not a moment to lose. It was for this that I came ; I shall remain in the cell, and you must pass for me, as, aided by the dark wintry weather, and our remarkable resemblance of figure, voice, and face, and these, my boyish garments, you well may do. Walk boldly into Dame Gertrude's apartments, and proffer to fetch from her gossip, Claudine, the miller's wife, the decoction of herbs, strange as the compound of a witch's cauldron, which she wants for her rheumatism. Once clear of the walls of Spandau, make straight for the frontier, and all will go well. No

remonstrance, no hesitation, no delay. This purse, too ; take this purse ! I shall be safe, I tell you ; and when we shall have found out your crime, there will be some chance of procuring a pardon. All will be right, provided you be manageable ! Away with you, Max !” And, in spite of contention and remonstrance, the brother was forced away, and the sister remained in his place, under a mixture of feelings that found vent first in hysterical laughter, then in hysterical sobs, and settled down at last into a trembling silence, a breathless pause of suspense and expectation, during which she seemed to hear her own heart beat, as she stood in the gloom and darkness.

Gradually, however, she became aware of sounds, the clang of gate and drawbridge, the clattering of arms and trampling of horses, which, piercing as they did through the massive walls of the inner

court, indicated no common confusion in the fortress; so that when Klaus, accompanied by a corporal's guard, made his appearance in the doorway, she was, to a certain degree, prepared for the discovery of her scheme and the recapture of the prisoner.

The jailer, however, appeared still in a state of mystification. "I knew that I should find Master Max safe in his apartment," muttered Hans Klaus, with considerable exultation. "My birds seldom get out of their cages. Come along, can't you?" cried he, in a sharp voice, to the corporal, as he swung along upon his crutches, with an activity wholly belying the incapacity of motion of which I spoke a few sentences back, that extraordinary and preternatural activity belonging to a lame man, when *the* one motive, the key of the clock, has been found, and the machinery has been fairly set in motion. "Get on, I

tell you," cried the jailer to the corporal ;
"I knew that I should find him. A prisoner escape from Spandau, indeed ! That seems likely !"

Agatha had seen and heard enough to take her measures. Max has been met and stopped, and brought back, thought she, and we are to be confronted. Now Heaven send him a good gift of impudence, and surely that is a commodity in which a court page can hardly be defective, and we shall baffle them yet.

So thinking, she followed Klaus to the guard-room, fully prepared to find that her brother had been arrested, but a little disconcerted to see seated in an arm-chair at the head of the table, the identical adust, stiff, soldier-looking personage, with his cocked hat, jack-boots, and shabby uniform, known to his loving subjects as Frederick the Great.

"Here, an' please your Majesty," said

Klaus, pointing with his crutch to the youth in his page's dress, whom he poked forward as he spoke, "here is my prisoner, Maximilian von Lindorf. The other boy is, as I said before, a lad called Wilhelm Steinfort, whom I and my old dame, waxing somewhat stiff, have hired to scrub down the courts, cut wood, and carry water. He was only going some quarter of a league for a decoction of"—

"Bah!" interrupted the King, "we did not come here to inquire into thy wife's rheumatism. Why, truly, Rosenthal, I think there be two of them. Come hither, master page."

Both youths advanced to the table.

"I called Maximilian von Lindorff only," added Frederick. "Which of you answers to that name?"

"I do," replied two voices, equally musical, to the right and left.

"Indeed! Who was your father?"

"Ernest von Lindorff, a Lieutenant-General in your Majesty's service," answered the two voices in duet.

"What is your age?"

"Seventeen the twentieth of last July," said both.

"Which of ye is the real prisoner?"

"I am," replied the two.

"Wilhelm! Wilhelm! The boy is crazy," interposed the jailer.

"Hold your peace, Master Klaus," said the King quickly; "according to their own confession, here was one prisoner upon the point of escaping."

"I am the prisoner," reiterated both.

"Which of ye hath a sister, the Fraulein Agatha?"

"I have!"

"Let me finish *my* sentence," quoth his Majesty. "Don't be in such haste, young Sirs, you are coming to *your* sentence fast enough. And you, Master

Jailer, let me see no more winking and nodding, and sign-making to the young boy whom thou call'st Wilhelm, but who answers to the name of Max. Canst not thou let him go to the gallows his own way. Take care of thine own neck, Master Klaus, which may be in jeopardy here for playing fast and loose with thy prisoners. Hearken, young Sirs," pursued his Majesty, resuming the examination. "Which of ye hath a sister, the Fraulein Agatha,"—here he paused a moment, and both were preparing to answer, "I have;" the words were forming on each rosy mouth; when he continued deliberately—"who is in love with my aide-de-camp here, the Baron Rosenthal?"

The reply, which, as I have said, hung trembling on either tongue, was suddenly cut short as the one face covered with blushes, after a shy stolen glance at the fellow culprit's half amused, half sympa-

thizing countenance, seemed sinking to the ground with shame; whilst Rosenthal, provoked, astonished, and confused, looked almost as guilty as the prisoners.

The King went on with his questions. "You have such a sister, then, as the young lady who is in love with the Baron? —eh? Did you speak, my Lord?" said Frederick, interrupting himself, as Rosenthal, vexed at heart for the vexation of his blushing lady love, uttered an impatient quirk behind the royal chair. "Hum! I thought you wished to suggest some enquiry, Monsieur le Baron. You did not, you say? Well! then you have such a sister as this Fraulein Agatha, the inamorato of the Baron here? And this leads us to the crime, for crime it is," continued Frederick, with a degree of seriousness which communicated a corresponding degree of apprehension to all who heard him.

“Do you know anything of this bit of paper?” asked he, sternly, producing from his pocket a scrap of writing, of which the top and the bottom and one corner seemed to be torn off.

“Would you believe, gentlemen?” continued the Majesty of Prussia, turning rapidly from Major Kleinwitz to Baron Rosenthal; “would you think it possible, that the son of a brave soldier like Lindorff, who died in my arms, on the field of battle—that his son, brought up in my household, treated as a child of my own, should write of me in terms like these?—in terms amounting to treason,” added he, waxing warmer as he described the guilt of the culprit. “Which of ye owns this scroll? Let none own it lightly, for it will be found to contain no slight matter. Read it, Kleinwitz. I picked it up myself under the boy’s window at Potsdam. I

know the writing well, having before now employed the ingrate as my amanuensis. Read."

He fixed his eyes on the culprits, who listened with surprise and alarm as Kleinwitz read. Thus ran the scroll:—

"So much for Rosenthal's petition, sweet sister, which I pray you to answer favourably. You cannot do otherwise, for I know that you have long loved him. For other matters we go on much as usual. The tyrant"—

"Here," said Kleinwitz, "some words are missing,—'got drubbed most famously last night by' "——

"And here some more, Sire," continued Kleinwitz, compassionately; "this scrawl is imperfect."

"Go on!" was the stern command.

"May this country soon be rid of him."

"That meaning is plain enough, Major

Kleinwitz. Is it not?" said the Monarch coldly. "There is no riddle there. The treason is plain and simple and so shall be the doom."

"Suffer me to complete the sentence," said one of the culprits, producing from the page's dress a morsel of paper which exactly fitted the scrawl in question.

"Sister!" cried Max in great perplexity, tugging at her sleeve—the sleeve of his own doublet upon Agatha's arm; "Sister, for Heaven's sake! better die!"

"Better live, Max!" returned his sister, smiling. "I know what I'm about, and the truth shall out, the truth, and the whole truth, Max! Read, Major Kleinwitz. No, not that nonsense at the beginning," added she, with a renewal of the shamefacedness which did so much injustice to her page's attire.

"No need to read that nonsense! Be-

gin there !” And the goodnatured commandant read :—

“ We get on much as usual. The tyrant of [*literature, Voltaire,*] got drubbed last night most unmercifully by [*our good old Fritz.*] Be it ominous, and the country soon rid of him [*for ever.*”]

“ Pardon, Sire, the impertinent expression ! It was a boy's flippancy, repented as soon as written, torn away, and, as I believe, destroyed. Pardon that impertinence, and, above all, forgive her whose only fault was a too deep love of her twin brother. Pardon, Sire, I beseech thee.”

“ Did old Fritz give Voltaire a sound drubbing, Max, in the match of wit we played last night ? Good faith, I believe he did !” chuckled the King. “ And thou wilt be glad to be quit of him ! Well, if that be the worst treason we meet with, the fortress of Spandau may go empty.

"Here is one fair prison-breaker though," added he, drawing Agatha gently towards him, "and the best way to dispose of her will be to give her her choice of warders, Hans Klaus or Baron Rosenthal."

END OF VOL. II.

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